

of the Fathers that ever mentioned the cross, doth establish these, and the sign of the cross, by one and the self same warranty. Besides, if upon the Fathers Tradition we use the cross, then must we receive and use it as they have delivered it unto us, that is, with opinion of vertue and efficacy, not only in the act of blessing our selves, and in the expelling of Devils, but even in the consecration of the blessed Sacrament. For the first, Tertullian is witness, saying, At every passage, at every setting forward, at every coming in and going out, at putting on of our cloaths, shoes, &c. We stamp our fore-head with the sign of the cross.

De coron. mil.

Epistola ad Demetrium.

Lib. 4. cap. 17.

For chasing of Devils, Jerom counelleth Demetrius to use the cross, saying. And with often crossing guard thy fore-head; that the destroyer of Egypt find no place in thee. Lactantius saith, Christs followers do by the sign of the cross, shut out the unclean spirit. Chrysostom in Psalm 109. The cross guardeth the mind, it taketh revenge on the Devil, it cureth the diseases of the soul, &c.

Cyprian de passion.

But these superstitions are small in regard of that efficacy which in the Sacraments, antiquity ascribed unto the cross, for Cyprian (being the ancientest that maketh mention of the cross in Baptism) speaking of it. Whose virtue, perfecteth all Sacraments, without which sign nothing is holy, nor any consecration taketh effect, and whosoever are the Ministers of the Sacraments, whatsoever hands do dip or anoint the comers to Baptism, out of whatsoever mouth the sacred word do proceed, the Authority of Operation doth by the sign of the cross, make effectual Sacraments.

Lately in Surrey a child rebaptized, because the cross was omitted.

It were superfluous to rehearse the rest. But hereby it is evident that the religious use of the cross, was even at the first sinful and superstitious, neither can it be shewed, that ever it was used by the Fathers, religionis ergo sine admixta superstitione, and this invention did no sooner creep into the Sacrament, but it drew unto it self such superstitious conceit of efficacy and necessity, that without it the means which God appointed for the consecration of the Elements seemed over-weak, yea, unavailable, according as some (e) amongst us account not their children lawfully baptized, yea will have them rebaptized, if the cross have been omitted, out of which may be observed, first how dangerous a thing it is to bring any humane invention into the service of God, first in the very pure age of the Church, it was punished with such a spiritual curse of horrible superstition.

Colosi. 2. 18.

Secondly, though at this time popery was not hatched, yet the mystery of iniquity was then a working, and the beginning as it were of the whorish fornications was found even in the Fathers times, so that, as worshipping of Angels in Pantes time, prayers and oblations for the dead in Tertullians time, be rightly counted Popish and Antichristian, though as yet that monster was not born: So this and other ceremonies ratified by the popish canons and constitutions, may well be taken for Popish and Antichristian, even in the Fathers times, seeing they then made away for the beast, and since have received further impiety and authority from him: wherefore to conclude as Isay exhorteth Gods people, to keep themselves from the rites and pollutions of the heathen, saying, depart, depart ye, go out from them and touch no unclean thing: So the spirit in the same manner chargeth the Church not to meddle with the corruptions of Antichristian Babylon, but go out of her my people saith he, that ye may not be partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

Isay. 52. 11.

Apoca. 18. 4.

The fear of which curse doth keep us from all the superstitious and Idolatrous ceremonies of that whorish Synagogue.

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A^s
PLAIN
AND PITHY EX-
POSITION OF THE
SECOND EPISTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS.

By that learned & judicious Diuine
M^r WILLIAM BRADSHAW, some-
time Fellow of SIDNEY COLLEDGE
in CAMBRIDGE.

Published since his Deceasse

BY
THOMAS GATAKER B. of D. and
Pastor of Rotherhith.



LONDON

Printed by *Edward Griffin* for *William Bladen*, and are
to be sold at his shop at the signe of the Bible, at
the great North dore of Paules. 1620.

PLATE
AND
POSITION OF THE
SECOND BRIDGE TO THE
THESSALYAN

By the learned & judicious
WILLIAM BAKER
Mellor of the Inner Temple
in Council

Tracts for the Poor in Decade

BY
THOMAS GATLAND, R. of D. and
Pastor of Northampton.



20:575

LONDON
Printed by F. & J. Johnson, St. Paul's Church-yard
to be had at his shop and at the principal
the Great North Street, 1820.



TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL AND

TRVLV RELIGIOUS M^{rs}

Katharine Redich of Newhall in Darby-

shire, increase of all graces spirituall,

with assurance of life

eternall.



RIGHT WORSHIPFUL,
Hauing prepared and fitted for the Presse, some part of the labors of that worthy seruant of GOD, that spent much of his time with you, and vnder your roofe both drew in and let out his last breath; the doubt was easily decided, to whom they should be addressed. None seemed to lay more due and rightfull claime to them then your selfe. The maine meanes of his maintenance were from your Familie while he liued:

A

and

and the principall stay of his, vnder God,
hath bin from You and Yours since his
deceasse. Neither may any more iustly
challenge the benefit of the light, then
those that haue ministred oyle to the
lamp. The Author, I doubt not, had he
liued to publish them himselfe, would so
haue disposed of them. And which way
could I, his deputy, more fitly direct
them, then whither he himselfe did in all
likelyhood intend them? Much benefit
by them, I assure my selfe, may redound
to all sorts. But your selfe may more spe-
cially reap fruit by them more then ordi-
narie; in that you were formerly a parta-
ker of that by word of mouth then deli-
uered, which is now here by help of pen
and Presse further represented to your
eye, and so reduced to your minde and
remembrance againe. The most that shall
light on them, they will salute but as
strangers at first sight; with whom yet
their worth once knowne and duely
weighed, will soone gaine them fauour
and good acceptance. To your selfe and
some few more they shall repaire as anci-
ent

acquaintance, renewing that familiar-
e, which they haue formerly had with
you. But the better you are acquainted
with them already, the lesse need is there
that I should commend them vnto you.
A strangers commendation is superflu-
ous betweene those that are inwardly ac-
quainted already. Let these few lines ra-
ther serue to acknowledge mine owne
engagement vnto You & Yours, (which
I vnfeinedly acknowledg, & wish I were
any way able really to testifie) for that
loue & kindnes that you haue from time
to time shewen, & do yet shew to the Au-
thor of this worke: wherein I may well
say of you (and I speake it without flat-
tery) as *Naomi* of *Boaz*, that *you cease not to*
doe good both to the liuing and the dead. The
Lord increase daily the number of those,
that do feelingly and effectually commi-
serate the forlorne estate that the poore
children of his Prophets, after their Pa-
rents deceasse, are ordinarily exposed vn-
to; and abundantly recompence what-
soeuer kindnes you haue shewen or shall
shew, in that kind, into the bosome of

Ruth 2. 20.

Hebr. 6. 10.

מצרים
Dan. 12. 3.

You and Yours. That which he ^{also} doubtles will not faile to do, who as ^{is} not *Unrighteous to forget the paines and labor of those that minister vnto his Saints*; so much lesse will he forget or be slacke to reward the labor and charge, that is bestowed vpon those that are (through his blessing) a meanes to make Saints. To his mercy and bounty I heartily recommend you, and so rest

Your Worships to be commanded
in the Lord,

Tho: Gataker.



To the Christian Reader.



Our Fathers (saith ^a GOD by the Prophet Zacharie to the Iewish people;) where are they? and the Prophets, do they liue for euer? But did not my words, which I gaue my seruants the Prophets in charge, take hold of your Fathers, and they returned? &c. Thereby intimating, that the word of God may haue his effect & efficacie euen after the deceasse of those that sometime deliuered it. As the Apostle saith, that though the Ministers of Gods word be laid in irons, (as himselfe also then was,) yet ^b the word of God is not bound with them: so though the Ministers of it may be taken away by death, yet the word of God doth not dye with them, but may remaine still (for the force and efficacie of it, or for the fruit and benefit of it) to those that partaked of it with them while they liued: they may ^c like shell-fish drawne out of the Sea, feede on that moysture on dry land, which they gathered and tooke in, while they were yet in the water. This, as it is true of all, that haue bin able and painfull in their places; so more specially of those, that by writing afford vnto publike view and generall use, the fruits of their learned and religious labors. Others benefit those only, that are within reach of their voice; these those also, that are without the report of their

^a Zach. 1. 3, 6.

^b ὁ λόγος ἔ
ἵσταται.
2. Tim. 2. 9.

^c Sui sibi succo
vivunt, ros si nō
cadit, Plaut.
Capt. scen. 1.

d *Sira.* 46. 20.

e *H. North*
of Prophecies.
Chytraus,
Strygel. in Si-
rac. & alijs.

f *Hebr.* 11. 4.

g *2. King.* 13.
21.

h *2. Chr.* 21. 12.

i *2. King.* 2. 11.

k *2. Pet.* 1. 15.

their speech, that abide many miles and leagues, them, that are by land and sea also severed and distoy-
ned from them. They profit those that live with them; these those also that live after them. As ^d Siracks Son saith of Samuel, (that which ^e some also so expound, to salve that Authors credit) they prophesie after their deceasse; and, as ^f the Apostle saith of ABEL, being dead they yet speake. As ^g the reliques of Elisha (his corps, I meane, though not superstitionly reserved,) raised him againe to life, that was occasio-
nally tumbled into his Tombe: so may their remain-
ders helpe to revive, and put spirituall life into many, that shall light on them, after that themselves haue left this naturall life, even while their corps lye laid up in their graues. ^h There came a writing, saith the Holy Ghost, from the Prophet Elias to King Ioram, who yet had ⁱ departed this world in the dayes of Iehosaphat, before euer that Ioram came to the Crowne. And ^k the Apostle Peter, by his writings, made account, that the faithfull might reap benefit, even after himselfe was dead and gone. This considered, I deeme them not unworthy due commendation, that preserve from perishing, and publish for the use of posteritie, the works and writings of those, that either in Diuinitie, or other usefull learning, haue taken paines to some good purpose. As on the other side, I hold them iniu-
rious, both to the present age, and to future times, that enuie or denie such things the publike, and either fea-
ther their owne priuate nests onely with them, or let them lye idle, by them, for wormes and mothes to make meat of. Having therefore committed to me, to peruse, and review, some part of the writings of
that

that godly, learned, and iudicious Diuine (now with
the Lord) M^r W. Bradshaw, and finding them to
be, not unlike their Author, full fraught with true
piety, sound iudgment, and good schollership; his ob-
servations naturall, not coact or far-fetched; his in-
vention rare and not ordinarie; his phrase, though not
swelling, yet emphaticall, full of spirit and life; his
discourse not extrauagant, but keeping close to the
point, and tending mainly to the improuement of piety
and godlines: in regard whereof, they seemed neither
unworthy to see further light, nor unable well to en-
dure the light; I was not unwilling (notwithstanding
mine owne occasions and distractions otherwise) out
of my loue to the deceassed, and desire of aduancing
the common good, to take some paines about the tran-
scribing and perfecting some of them, and so fitting
them for the Presse. And, among the rest, perceiuing
these his Meditations on that Second to the Thessalo-
nians, to be both pithy and compendious, handling an
entire parcell of Scripture, that in our language few
haue formerly delt with; as also that himselfe had
begun to write them out more fairely and largely, then
ordinarie, as intending some such thing, I thought good
to breake the ice with them: And so beginning at the
entrance into the Second Chapter, where he had left
transcribing, out of other his owne notes containing a
continued Commentarie to the end of the Epistle (some
defects onely supplied) haue I made up the whole
worke. Which if it shall finde such good acceptance, as
my desire is it should, and as the worke it selfe (I doubt
not) will deserue, I may receiue thereby encouragement
to take further paines, about the finishing and fitting
for

for publike view, some other of his labors, that as yet
remaine with me, for the good of Gods Church, and
the benefit of his poore Wife, and foure fatherles Or-
phans. Had he himselfe, while he lived, put the last
hand to the two latter Chapters, as he had done to the
first, the whole worke had bin more consummate and
exact then now it is. Yet as it is, though not altogether
so artificially compact and put together, and so wanting
some of its grace that way, it is for the maine matter of
it, in all likelyhood, no other then it would haue bin, had
he proceeded to perfect it, as may appeare by comparing
his second transcript with his first draught, in that
that he had finished. That blessed Spirit accompanie
the publishing of it, by whose immediate inspiration the
Epistle it selfe was at first endited, and by whose gra-
cious assistance, these Meditations on it were formerly
conceiued and deliuered; and through his blessing it
may proue beneficiall and comfortable to not a few in
the reading of it, as in hearing it hath bin the like to
many already. To Him commending it and thee,
I rest,

Thine in Christ,

T.G.



AN
EXPOSITION
of the Second Epistle to the
Thessalonians.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

VERS: I. *Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,*



HE principall scope of this Epistle is, to confirme and strengthen this Church in the sinceritie of that Faith and Religion wherein it was first planted, and therein to arme it against all tryals and temptations arising either from wicked Persecutors, or corrupt and antichristian Seducers.

The parts of the Epistle are many, knit together in that frame and method by the Inditer thereof, that was most common in those times and places,

B

amongst

The first part
of the Epistle.

amongst not onely diuine, but humane writers in their Letters and Epistles.

The first part is a Superscription, wherein is expressed :

1. The Authors of the Epistle.
2. The Persons to whom the Epistle is sent.

The principall Author was *Paul*, by whose spirit alone (stirred vp and directed by Gods Spirit) it was indited. *Silvanus* and *Timothie* consented thereunto, whose names *Paul* vseth together with his owne, for the further establishing and confirming of that truth which here he writes of: and to testifie that they were of the same iudgement and affection with him.

In these three Persons, especially in the first, is declared the diuine authoritie of this Epistle; For these being (though so much be not in this text specified) the one an Apostle, the other Euangelists, their authoritie in the dispensation of the Gospel, whether by mouth or pen, was more then humane, they hauing (especially *Paul*) a Spirit that led them into all Truth, and therefore an Epistle written from them, and vnder their names vnto any Church, was to be receiued from them, as if it had bin sent from heauen written with Christs owne hand, and subscribed by all the Saints and Angels in heauen.

It must be acknowledged, that though they had concealed their names, (as the Author to the Hebrewes doth,) that yet the very matter thereof, would haue owned that Spirit by which it was indited. Yet the prefixing of their names doth so much

much the more particularly confirme the authoritie thereof, and adde weight and moment vnto the ſame.

We ſee then firſt of all; That the very names of *Paul* and *Silvanus* &c, (of themſelues but weake and fraile men) adde authoritie and credit to the word of God. That which without their names would haue bin acknowledged to be of diuine authoritie, is for their names ſake of the greater authoritie; the Spirit of God giueth authoritie to them, they giue authoritie & waight to it. This is true alſo of all true Chriſtians, and not of theſe Worthies onely, according to the degree and measure of Grace communicated vnto them. The Goſpell (ſo far forth as they ſincerely profeſſe it) doth not onely honour their names, but their names alſo honour it. Miſerable profeſſors are they, who after ſuch a manner profeſſe the Goſpell, that neither they are a credit to it, nor it a credit to them; much more they, (and how many are they!) whoſe names are a reproch and diſcredit to it, and it to them, in the eyes of all that feare the Lord.

Tit. 1. 10.

2. In that *Paul* for the further credit and authoritie of that truth, which here by the Spirit of God he is moued to write, uſeth alſo the names of *Timothie* and *Silvanus*, which in Gifts, Office, and Authoritie were inferiour vnto him, it may teach vs thus much: That the conſent of Chriſtians amongſt themſelues, eſpecially of the Miniſters of the Goſpell, addeth much authoritie to the truth which they profeſſe: yea the conſent

of inferiours, in gifts, graces, and callings, addeth authoritie to that which Superiours do hold and professe. Though *Silvanus* and *Timothies* authoritie be lesser then *Pauls*, yet concurring with *Pauls*, it makes his the greater in the Church of God. The more authoritie then that a man doth desire to haue in Gods Church, the more must he labour after the consent of his brethren: yea of them that in gifts, and authoritie are his inferiours. Vaine are the conceits of them, that looke to amplify their Authoritie in Gods Church by their Singularitie: God may indeed reueale that truth to one, which he conceales from another, neither is any such truth to be smothered or betrayed for want of this consent: yet this knowledge of his, in this or that diuine truth, so long as it is singular, is and will be amongst the people of God, of so much the lesse authoritie. The authoritie of *Paul* then flourisheth most, when *Silvanus* and *Timothie* ioyne in consent with him; neither are they led by *Pauls* Spirit, that contemne and make no reckoning of the consent of their brethren, though inferiors vnto them: Were thy authoritie amongst Christians as great as *Pauls*; yet it is the lesse, if thou haue not the consent of *Timothie* and *Silvanus*, to shew for that which thou holdest, teachest, and professest.

— Vnto the Church of the Thessalonians —

The Persons vnto whom this Epistle was written and sent were Thessalonians: i. certaine people dwelling

dwelling in or about that famous Citie of Theſſalonica in Macedonia, built by *Philip* the Father of *Alexander* the Great, and ſo named in memorie of a great victorie gotten ouer Theſſalia, a Country of Greece, bordering vpon Macedonia.

This Epistle is not written to the whole Citie, or Country there, but to the *Church*: i. To ſo many of them, whether Citizens or others, as were ioyned together in a holy ſocietie, and communion in the worſhip and ſeruice of Chriſt, according to his will reuealed in the Goſpell; for ſuch were the Churches which the Apoſtles planted, and wrote their Epistles vnto. The ſpeciall fruit then of this and ſuch like Epistles, is to be reaped principally by them that are members of the Church, and that liue in the communion thereof. Thoſe which direct letters to whole Cities, Countries or States, uſe therein (if they be wiſe) to treat of ſuch matters as principally concerne the whole Bodie they write vnto: Howſoeuer therefore Hereticks, Schiſmaticks, Perſons excommunicated, and Infidels, may reap ſome fruit and profit by the due reading and meditating vpon this Epistle, yet it being by the Spirit of God inſpired and breathed for the uſe of a whole Church, the principall fruit thereof, is to be reaped by them that are members of the Church, and in the Communion of the Church; Neither did either this, or any other of the Apoſtles write any of their Epistles and Letters, to Countries, Cities, or Perſons, before they were conuerted, thereby to draw them to the Faith, and the Communion
of

of the Church. But first they won them by preaching, and then they writ vnto them to stablish and confirme them in the Faith. Though therefore that which they writ, bee for substance the same Gospell, with that which they preached: yet by this it may appeare, that the principall fruit of the Gospell written, is to be reaped and gathered by them, which haue beene called to liue in the Communion, and vnder the spirituall gouernment of the Church, by the Gospell preached.

— *which is in God our Father, and in our Lord Iesus Christ.*

He describes the Church he writes vnto by this Argument, *That it is in God our Father, and in our Lord Iesus Christ.* Wherein the Apostle declares the neere vnion & coniunction betweene God and euery true Church, if they bee in deede and truth that which they professe to bee, They are in the neereft and straitest band knit vnto God himselfe, yea ingrafted into him: it is not possible for one Person to be so knit vnto another, as the Church and members thereof are knit vnto God; They are heere sayd to be *in God*, and *in Christ*, and other where God and Christ are sayd to be in them; So that they are in God, and God is in them, which noteth the neereft, and most inseparable, and blessed Vnion that may be.

The Apostle amplifies this Vnion, by describing that God, and that Christ, in which this Church was, to bee *his and their Father, his and their*

their Lord and Iesus; So that God the Father is a Father, and God the Son is a Lord and Sauour, (for so *Iesus* signifieth) vnto all those that are in this Vnion: otherwise there were no comfort, but horror in the same. God therefore being their Father, and Christ their Sauour and Lord, those that are thus ingrafted into them, may presume to receiue from this Father, being Almighty, any good thing that they shall neede, and to be secured and freed from any euill that may hurt them. It is a nature ingrafted into Fathers, by this heavenly Father, to doe their children all the good they can: and such Lords and Masters, as haue beene content with a great price, euen with their owne seruitude, yea death, to redeeme their seruants from their cruell enemies, will not suffer them to haue hurt, if it lie in them to inhibit it. The Churches of God therefore, hauing God to be their Father, and Christ the Son of God to be their Lord, their Iesus and Sauour, and being in the neereft bond, euen by the Spirit of God knit vnto God & Christ, they may build vpon it, that this Christ their Sauour, in whom they are, will saue them from whatsoeuer may hurt them: That this God their Father, will shew the true and most naturall disposition of a Father towards them, in prouiding for them whatsoeuer shall be for their good. And this shall wee haue a lively feeling of, if in our holy communion and society with the Church, wee shall behaue our selues towards God, as dutifull children, & vnto Christ Iesus, as faithfull seruants: Till then wee shall neuer know, what it is to bee
in

in God our Father, and in our Lord Iesus Christ.

This Vse we may make of this Doctrine.

1. If we desire to feele the comfort and blessing of being in God our Father, and in our Lord Iesus Christ, let vs become, not in outward profession onely and in shew, but in deede and truth, true members of the Church, delighting in the communion and fellowship of the Saints; for this prerogative is heere attributed vnto such. Neuer thinke that thou art in God and in Christ, so long as thou art out of the Church and Communion of the Saints, so long at least, as thou art not in will and affection ioyned vnto the same.

2. Let vs feare that wee are not true members of any Church of Christ, vntill we haue some feeling of this, that we are in God, and so in him, that he is vnto vs a Father, and a Sauour. And let vs neuer rest and bee at quiet, vntill wee haue a sweet and comfortable sense indeede, that he is indeede our Father, and our Sauour, by some infallible fruits and signes thereof; for how can it bee, but that they that are in God, as in their Father, and in Christ, as in their Sauour, but they shall, if they stirre vp that grace which is in them, feele in some degree the vertue of a Father, and of a Sauour, transfused into their Soules.

3. Let euery Church esteeme this vnion, as a matter of the greatest honour and prerogative that may bee, if it had nothing els to set forth it selfe withall, yet let vs esteeme this to be fulnesse of honour vnto it, the fruit that springs from this Vnion, the graces that are communicated in this
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Coniunction, should abundantly content, and satisfie every true Church of Iesus Christ, though she had nothing els in the world to boast of.

And thus much of the first part of the Epistle.

V E R S. 2. *Grace bee with you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Iesus Christ.*

TH E second part followeth, which is a Salutation, wherein he testifieth the desire that he hath of their spirituall good and welfare. These Salutations are common both in humane and diuine writers in the beginning of their letters, thereby the more to gaine the affection of them they write vnto, vnto that they write of; Most vse them for ceremonie, and to be in the fashion; and many that most feelingly vse them, doe therein onely testifie a naked desire and affection to the parties they salute. But when they proceede from a sanctified heart, mooued and stirred thereto by the Spirit of God, they are then powerfull and effectuall instruments, of procuring and effecting that grace and blessing, which therein they wish and desire to others. For when the Holy Spirit of God mooueth a man, to wish well vnto his brother, it is a signe, that by the meanes thereof, it intendeth to worke that good in him: for those wishes and desires that are stirred by Gods Spirit, are not in vaine, but shall be in some measure accomplished and fulfilled. The salutations therefore that proceede from a sanctified heart, whether vt-

tered by mouth or pen, are so many reall blessings to the persons they are bestowed vpon. There is neuer a hearty *good morrow* or *good euen* that they bestow vpon thee, but thou farest the better for it.

The particular good that he wisheth then in this Salutation, is the same that he wisheth, not onely in effect, but in a manner word for word, to all the Churches and Persons, that he writes vnto, (that to the Hebrewes excepted, which he doth not professe to be his).

By *Grace from God &c*, he meaneth the free fauour, and loue of God towards them in Iesus Christ manifested vnto them, by the testimonie of Gods Spirit. By *Peace from God &c*, the quiet and comfort of their Soules and Consciences, arising from the apprehension of the grace aforesaid, whereby they might discern, that God was reconciled vnto them in Iesus Christ, and at peace with them, and they freed from the feare of all their spirituall enemies. This then is the effect of this Salutation, an vnfained and hearty desire, that the lesse grace and fauour and peace they found amongst men, since they had given their names to Iesus Christ, the more they might finde with God in Iesus Christ. That they might haue sure euidence, euen from God the Father, and from Iesus Christ, that they are in fauour and grace with God, and that he is reconciled vnto them, and at peace with them.

We may learne hence,

1. What is the greatest good, that one Christian can

can wiſh or do for another: euen to deſire and indeauour to bring one another into grace and fauour with God. The Apoſtle could not in any of his Epiſtles deuſe a greater good to wiſh vnto them he writes vnto. If a man might haue neuer ſo many wiſhes, either for himſelf or others granted vnto him; to wiſh this, is to wiſh more then all the world beſides. If thou couldſt by wiſhing get thy neighbour the higheſt grace and fauour with all the Princes and Monarchs in the world: If thou couldſt procure ſufficient bonds of peace, betweene him and all the Powers and Potentates vpon Earth, yea and all the Devils in Hell, ſo that none of them, either would or could hurt him, but would do him all the good they could: yet this were nothing in compariſon of this Grace and Peace. If by wiſhing, or prayer, or indeauour thou couldſt procure this to thy neighbour, thou doeſt more for him, then if thou didſt procure him the Monarchie of the whole world. For alas, what would it profit a man, if all the men in the world, and all the Diuels in Hell, yea and Angels in Heauen were combined to doe him all the good they could, if the Almighty God be againſt him, and at warre with him? On the contrary ſide, what neede a man care, though he were in diſgrace with all the world, and though all the Powers of Earth and Hell were vp in armes againſt him, ſo long as he is in grace and fauour with God, and in league with him. Let vs that are Chriſtians be content (if otherwiſe we cannot get it,) to forfeit and forgo, for this, all other Grace and Peace whatſo-

euier: and let vs be ashamed to lose the least pledge and interest thereof, for the purchase of the highest and greatest grace and peace amongst men.

2. In that *Paul* to win their affection the more, doth aboue all things wish in this manner, this grace and peace vnto them, it shewes that themselves did aboue all things wish and desire the same: For when men, to gaine the affection of others, doe wish any good vnto them, they make choice of that good, which they conceiue is most desired and affected of them, and which they are in labour and pursuit after. Therefore a Christian Soule wisheth and desireth nothing more, then Grace and Peace from God: If thou shouldst wish him grace and fauour with the greatest Prince in the world, thou shouldst not so much winne his heart, as in wishing and desiring this Grace and Peace from God. The more then that men haue receiued the signes and tokens of this Grace, and Peace, the more they desire and affect the same. These Christians were in God the Father, and in Iesus Christ, and therefore had already receiued Grace and Peace from them in some degree: so that the more they haue, the more they desire: neither doe any so much feeble the want thereof, as they that haue most tasted of it. The more the Lord in this life manifests his grace vnto them, the more they see their owne gracelesnes; the more they see their owne gracelesnes, the more they are afflicted and humbled in their Soules, and the more still in that regard they desire grace & peace with

with God. What should we thinke then of those, which despise the meanes of this grace and peace, and which most of all despise those, who by their office do not only wish, but indeuour to procure this grace and peace vnto them, and the more they indeuour it, the more they hate them: the next way to loose their heart, and stirre vp their hatred, is to wish them grace and peace from God; they thinke they superabound therewith already: Surely such are manifest despisers thereof, and are in great danger neuer to taste thereof.

3. That grace and peace which is the life and comfort of a Christian Soule, is not onely *in* God the Father, and in Iesus Christ, but *from* them; and that is said to come from them, when it is not hidden in them, but shewes it selfe in manifest signes and tokens from them. The Soule & Conscience of an humbled sinner, will not in this matter trust vnto the conceits and opinion of others, though all the men in the world would secure him of this, that God is reconciled vnto him, and at peace with him: yet he will not trust to that, except he haue some infallible euidence from God himselfe, except he by the mouth of his Spirit, speake peace vnto their Soules, they will still feare, that they are out of grace and fauour with God: Any fancie or conceit is sufficient to perswade wicked men, that they are in grace and at peace with God: yea those ordinarily are most conceited of it, that are furthest from it. But the Apostles wish here, is the wish of euery true Christian, that they may haue it *from God the Father, and from Iesus Christ, as it were*

were vnder their hand and seale. But when may a Christian be said, to receiue *grace and peace from God* &c? When the Spirit of God in the due vse of Gods holy ordinances, doth seale and confirme the same to the soule and conscience of an humbled sinner, that groneth vnder the burthen of his sinnes. Then doth the Grace and Peace of God, come vnto thee from God, when the Spirit of God testifies vnto thy spirit, in the word, in the Sacraments, in the Church, in the Ministerie &c, that thou art in grace and fauour with him.

VERS. 3. *We ought to thanke God alwaies for you brethren, as it is meet—*

THe third part of this Epistle (beginning here & reaching to the end of the Chapter) is spent in Consolation: wherein the Apostle labours to hearten and incourage them against the troubles and persecutions which they suffered for their profession; thereby the more to strengthen and confirme them in the faith of Iesus Christ. This method is vsually obserued in all letters, when men write to them that are in any trouble or affliction, after they haue saluted them, and before they write of other matters vnto them, to comfort them. By the way, before we come to particulars, we may obserue one speciall reason, why he wisheth vnto this Church, Grace and Peace from God the Father, and from Iesus Christ; because for God the Father and for Iesus Christs sake, they had lost all grace and fauour and peace

peace with men: ſo that the more diſgrace, and the leſſe peace, that Chriſtians haue with men, for the profeſſion of Ieſus Chriſt, the more grace and peace they may expect from God. For that which vpon this ground the Spirit of God doth wiſh vnto a man, it will effect: The more then that men for Gods cauſe doe diſgrace vs, and warre with vs, the more God ſhewes his grace and fauour vnto vs.

The firſt meanes he uſeth to comfort them by, is by praiſing and commending them for thoſe graces, which in theſe their troubles and perſecutions they did manifeſt to be in them. *verſ. 3, 4.* wherein in his owne name, and in the name of *Timothie* and *Siluenus*, he firſt vnfainedly acknowledgeth, that for their ſakes, they were bound to giue thanks vnto God as long as they liue. What a glory was this vnto this Church, that theſe three Worthies ſhould profeſſe and acknowledge thus much vnto them?

Our leſſons hence are theſe.

1. That if we behaue our ſelues in the houſe and Church of God as we ought to doe, we ſhall binde all Chriſtians, yea the Prophets and Apoſtles, and all the Saints of heauen vnto vs. They ſhall be indebted vnto God for vs, and ſhall eſteeme themſelues bound for euer to praiſe and magnifie his name for vs. And let vs neuer thinke we haue demeaned our ſelues as we ought to doe in Gods Church, vntill we haue giuen iuſt cauſe to all the godly that knowes vs, eſpecially to our Paſtors and Miniſters, to praiſe and bleſſe God for

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vs, and to esteeme themselves eternally indebted vnto God for our sakes. But alas, most of vs doe so behaue our selues in Gods Church, that we giue our Ministers, and all religious people, cause rather to mourne before the Lord, and to complaine vnto him of vs.

2. Let vs from *Pauls* example, of how great note and worth so euer we be in Gods Church, learne to esteeme Gods graces in others, as blessings vpon our selues, and to haue such interest in the fruit of them, as to thinke our selues bound and indebted vnto God, in all thankfulness for them, as if we our selues had a title to and an interest in them. There was not the poorest Christian in *Thessalonica*, but *Paul* himselfe did thinke himselfe the better for that Grace that was in him. We are all members of one mysticall bodie; the grace of one member is the honor of another; and it is a signe that that man doth not esteeme his brother a fellow-member of the same bodie with him, that counts his brothers Graces, disgraces vnto him, as though his owne graces were eclipsed and lost their lustre through the brightnes of anothers. We know that the comelinesse of the hand or foote, doth not eclipse, but rather adde beauty to the beauty of the face. If therefore we iudge our brethren members of the same mysticall bodie of Christ with vs, we cannot but esteeme their graces a grace vnto vs, and that our selues (how bright soeuer) do shine so much the more by the beames of their graces; and therefore we are bound in a bond of debt vnto God for them, as *Paul* here acknow-

acknowledgeth. But we are most of vs so far from this, that we hardly thinke our selues bound to giue God thanks, for those gifts and graces that are in our selues, we so seldome, so coldly, so slightly and negligently performe this dutie. And as for the graces of others, we are (the Lord be mercifull vnto vs for the same) of this disposition, rather to murre, grudge and repine against God for them, as though the more he bestowed his graces vpon them, the more he did wrong and disgrace vs.

Because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the loue of euery one of you one towards another aboundeth.

This is the reason why *Paul, Silvanus &c.* acknowledge themselves bound to be thankfull vnto God, as is aforesaid; wherein is expressed the speciall matter and argument of their praise: Their exceeding growth and increase in faith and loue, whereby he meanes all religious duties to God and man, required either in the Law or Gospell. They shewed euery day more and more zeale to Gods glory, in making more and more conscience of the Ordinances of God; they shewed greater and greater delight in the word, the Sacraments, the Sabbath, the Ministerie, Prayer; they daily more and more grew in knowledge, and manifested more and more the signes and tokens of Repentance; and ouer and besides this, they were euery day more and more
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kinde, louing and free-hearted one to another, one struiuing to goe before another, not in the duties of Pietie and Religion only, but also in louing kindnesse, humilitie, liberalitie, fidelitie, curtelie, iustice &c: from such fruits as these doth the Apostle gather, the increase and growth of their Faith and Loue. For as Faith and Loue are seene vnto men onely, by the works that proceed therefrom; so the growth and increase of them, is seene by the growth and increale of works. Neuer tell me that any groweth in Faith and Loue, but he that groweth and increaseth in the aforesaid duties towards God and his Neighbour.

The words whereby the Apostle noteth this growth, signifie to *ouer-increase* and *super-abound*; not that their Faith and Loue did swell and flow ouer those banks which God in the Law and Gospell prescribed vnto them; for that neither was possible, nor praise-worthy, (as we shall haue more occasion to speake afterward): but his meaning was, that it exceeded the expectation of man, and they went further then man could require at their hands, though they came short of that which God requirerh.

1. From the Persons thus praised, and the matter of their praise considered together, we are to learne,

1. That the praise and glory of a Church or Christian, doth not lie onely in this, in being *alwaies the same*, but in growing and proceeding from grace to grace. Those sciences are not commendable that grow not in the stocke wherein they

they are graſſed, but ſtand at a ſtay. The Graces of God are not dead, but liuing plants; if they take roote in thy heart, they will grow and increaſe; if thy faith and loue doe not grow and increaſe in thee, they are dead, they neuer tooke any root in thee: though for a time thou maiſt haue ſome reſpect in Gods Church for the ſame, yet the end will be ſhame and diſhonor, and thou diſcouered to be an hypocrite, when thy Faith and Loue appeare to be more and more withered, as it will, if it doe not more and more grow and flouriſh. I would to God (beloued) we had our portion in this praiſe; I would to God, your Miniſter could thanke the Lord for you in this reſpect: but the Lord knowes, and all our Conſciences tell vs, we are far from this praiſe. It were well in comparison with vs, if we did retaine our firſt Faith and Loue; but it is to be feared, that with the Ephesi-ans we haue loſt that, ſo far are we from growing from faith to faith, and from loue to loue with theſe Theſſalonians.

2. This is the ſingular praiſe of this and all other Churches, that their Loue one towards another groweth with their Faith; the more faith in God, the more loue towards our Neighbour. Shew me the growth of thy faith by the growth of thy loue. It is as poſſible for a fire to increaſe without the increaſe of heat, as for faith to increaſe without the increaſe of loue. The faith and profeſſion of thoſe men therefore is but Phariſaiſme and hypocriſie, which manifeſts it ſelfe in the diſdaine and contempt of their brethren. There are
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therefore no greater enemies in the world, to loue and vnitie amongst brethren, then those that are enemies to the growth of Faith and Religion, and all the powerfull and effectuell meanes thereof. For such as a mans Faith and Religion is, such is his Loue, for quantitie, for qualitie; no true faith, no true loue; an vnfound faith, an vnfound loue; a ceremoniall faith, a ceremoniall loue; a sincere faith, a sincere loue; much faith, much loue; an hypocriticall faith, a dissembling loue.

3. In faith and loue we should not thinke it inough, to stint and moderate them according to that measure and rule onely that man may expect and exact at our hands; but we must strue to exceed that, and according to the patterne of this Church labour therein to go beyond the expectation and imagination of men. But where are such Churches and Christians now to be found? It were well for vs in comparison of that we are, that we were but answerable to the expectations of men; or that we were proceeded but so farre in faith and loue, as man might iustly require and exact at our hands; but the Lord knowes we are far wanting euen of that.

2.

From the Persons praising we may learne,
To giue God the praise and thanks, not onely for Faith and Loue, but also for the growth and increase of them, whether in our selues or others. Its he that deserues the thanks for it more then any else. Though God tie vs to be thankfull to men, when we reap the fruits of their faith & loue,
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yet in comparison, its no thanks to them; it is Gods worke in them. Otherwise the most religious and louing men that euer were, if God should leaue them to their owne natures, would quickly shew themſelues monsters of impietie and malice, and the Wolues and Beares of the Forrest would as ſoone merit thanks at our hands as they: in ſuch caſes therefore to be thankfull to men for the fruits that we reape of their faith and loue, and to forget God, is to make them the authors of their owne grace, and ſo to giue that honour to them, which is due to God, an Idolatry too vſuall in theſe times. And yet we are not to whiſper this thanks in Gods eare onely, but we are to profeſſe and acknowledge it, as much as conueniently we may, euen to them that it concernes, to the end we might the more hearten and incourage them therein. And this no doubt is one cauſe, why ſo many faint and languish in faith and loue (eſpecially in time of perſecution) for that there is ſo litle incouragement of this kinde amongſt Chriſtians: we paſſe by the Graces of our brethren, as though they were not worthy to be regarded, or any notice to be taken of them. And if it be our dutie to acknowledge our thankfulnes to God for the Graces of our brethren, the immediate fruits whereof doe not ſo directly concerne vs, as others, (for *Paul* ſpeaks not of their loue to him, but one towards another,) how much more is it our dutie, to doe it, when we our ſelues in our owne perſons, ſhall immediately reap the fruits of our brothers faith and loue, when his loue
shall

shall directly and manifestly in a speciall manner grow and increase towards vs.

VERS. 4. *So that we our selues glory of you in the Churches of God,—*

HE amplifies their former praise, *That such was the growth and increase of their Faith and Loue, that he moreouer boasted and gloried of them in the Churches of God.* How could this but wonderfully encourage them, to be constant to the end, to consider that their praises, were not onely talked of, but gloried in, and that in no base and profane Conventicles, but in the holy Churches, and Assemblies of God: not by any ordinarie or common Persons in Gods Church, but by *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothie* themselves, the great and most famous trumpets of Iesus Christ. Who would make the boastings of such Persons in vaine? Who would not by all possible meanes vphold and maintaine such an honour? Who would not in the midst of any troubles and miseries whatsoeuer, reioyce and glory in such a fame founded vpon such siluer Trumpets, in such famous Assemblies?

Let vs then (Beloued) learne, to emulate the glory of this Church; let vs strue after such a profession of Faith, and practise of Loue, that the worthiest in the Churches of Christ, may be provoked to boast and glory of vs, in all the Assemblies of the faithfull: let vs esteeme this the greatest honour that may be, that *Paul* should glory in

in vs, and the Churches of God should ring of our praises; we neede not then care though all the men in the Earth, and all the Devils in Hell, doe barke and baule against vs: far be it from vs, to forgo any part of this honour, to stop the mouthes of any hell-hounds whatsoever, much more for the purchasing of honour in their mouthes, to giue any cause, that the Churches of God, should speake or heare dishonourably of vs. And though there be now no *Pauls* in Gods Church, to giue vs such encouragements; yet let not this euer-the-lesse discourage vs, to tread in the steps of this Church: for if we be like them, God can and will, by some meanes or other, make our names as glorious in the Churches of God, as if *Paul* himself were liuing, and went from Church to Church, to glory and reioyce in vs. But alas (beloued) when we shall compare our selues with this Church, can we thinke that *Paul*, if he were aliue, would boast of vs, in all the Churches where he should come? Would he not rather, considering the coldnes of some of vs, and the contempt of Religion in other some, in the midst of many meanes, speake of vs in the Churches of God, with shame and sorrow of heart? Doe not most of vs so behaue our selues in Gods Church, that we rather deserue to be boasted and gloried of in Ale-houses and Tauernes, and in profane Stages and Theatres, then in the holy Churches of God? Doe we not most of vs so liue, as if we affected, that Minstrills, Stage-players, Ale-house-knights, and the rest of the rascalitie should glory and boast of

of vs, rather then the Apostles, Euangelists, and Ministers of Iesus Christ? rather then *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothie*?

Let vs in the second place learne of *Paul*, how to comfort and incourage those Churches and Christians whom we see to grow and increase in Grace: let vs not onely acknowledge and professe our selues bound, to thanke God for them alwaies, but let vs honour their names in all holy meetings and assemblies, that they may see they are respected and honoured for their Faith, and other graces of God: and be we in neuer so high place in Gods Church, let vs account the faith and loue of others, our owne crowne and glory; let vs boast of it, and glory in it, in all the holy meetings and assemblies of Gods Saints, and strīue that the eyes of all Gods Churches, may be fixed vpon them, and their tongues speake of their praises. This is a powerfull and most effectuell meanes to strengthen and confirme them, in the graces of God against all remptations and discouragements whatsoeuer. The neglect of this dutie hath bin no doubt, a speciall meanes, that so many in time of tryall, haue shrunke and fallen from the Faith. It is indeed a weaknes in Christians, to stand in neede of such incouragements; they ought to be so grounded in that Faith which they do professe, that though all the world should disgrace, and dishonour them for it: yea though they which haue taught and instructed them therein, should discourage them from it, yet they ought constantly, to cleaue vnto the same. But seeing that

that the humane frailtie of Christians, needs such props as these, especially in time of persecution, we shall be guilty of one anothers fall, if we doe not by such meanes labor to support one another. But far are such from this Apostles Spirit, who are so far from boasting, and glorying, either in those Churches or Persons that grow and increase in the graces of God, that of all other they most despight, and disgrace them, in all the assemblies and meetings where they open their mouths.

— *Because of your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations which you suffer.*

This is the speciall matter of *Pauls* glorying and reioycing. *The faith and patience which they manifested in all their persecutions and tribulations:* By which it appeares, that this Church was at this time very much afflicted and persecuted, and that the scope of the Apostles praise, in this and the former verse, is to comfort them in the same, and thereby to strengthen them, that they may perseuere, (as I haue said before,) in the grace receiued. He testifieth therefore, that he doth not onely esteeme himselfe bound, to be alwayes thankfull vnto God for them, in regard of their exceeding growth and increase in faith and loue, but also that in the same regard, he glorieth and boasteth of them, in the Churches of God, especialy for this, that in the midst of so many persecutions and

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troubles that they sustained, they shewed so much patience and faith.

Faith then and Patience in persecution and tribulation, is the greatest glory of a Christian. They that in the midst of many iniuries and wrongs, disgraces, losse of goods, libertie, hazard of life, &c, for Christs sake, can still notwithstanding by faith apprehend Gods goodnesse and loue towards them, conceiuing neuer the lesse hope in God, bearing neuer the lesse affection, but rather the more to that Faith and Religion for which they suffer, neuer shewing the least repentance for their profession, how much soeuer they suffer for the same, neither murmuring nor repining against God therefore, nor breaking forth through impatience, into any breach of dutie towards God or man. They which haue growne to such an height of Grace, shall be honorable in the Churches of God in a high degree, for their profession. But dishonorable is that profession, and not worthy to be named with any respect or honour in Gods Churches, that in peace and prosperitie maketh some shew and flourish, but when persecution commeth shrinks in the wetting.

The Apostle ioyneth Patience and Faith together, neither can they be sundred in time of persecution, but the one sheweth it selfe in the other: where there is impatiencie in suffering, there appeares no faith but infidelitie: Faith makes Patience, Patience manifests Faith. Neuer say thou beleeuest in Christ, if thou canst not shew thy beleeefe in patient suffering for Christ: at least neuer looke

looke that thou shouldst be praised, and gloried of in the Churches of God for thy Faith, vntill it shine and shew forth it selfe in thy Patience. The glory of a Christians faith, doth not consist so much in beating downe and resisting the enemies of Christ, as in a meeke and willing suffering of wrong and euill. If thou suffer neuer so much for Christs sake and the Gospell, though thou shouldst giue thy bodie to be burned for the same, yet if thou do it not patiently but perforce, thou maist be pittied, but neuer looke to be praised for it in the Churches of God. Those sufferings only are celebrated there, wherein a man may liuely behold the very face and liuing countenance of Faith in Patience.

VERS. 5. *Which is a token of the righteous iudgement of God, that yee may be counted worthy of the kingdome of God, for which yee also suffer.*

Hitherto of the first part of their consolation, wherein the Apostle taketh notice of their persecutions and troubles, praising them for the Graces of God manifested therein.

The second part followeth, taken from the happy issue and consequent, which these patient sufferings of theirs did portend. These sufferings (saith he) of yours are an infallible signe or demonstration of the great day of Iudgment, wherein, the more patiently you haue suffred for the kingdome of God, the more you shall be reputed

and declared worthy of that kingdome for which you haue suffred. What an vnspeakable consolation would the due consideration of this be vnto all that shall suffer for righteousness sake: that the more they suffer, the more they may assure themselves of a day of publique hearing before the Lord, who will thorowly debate all those iniuries and wrongs, that haue bin offred vnto them, and that not in a corner, but in the face of the world, that this iudgement wherein this cause of theirs shall be heard, shall be a *righteous iudgement*, not corrupted by bribes, and ouer-swaied by partiall affection, but proceeding according to the equitie of the cause, without respect to the qualitie of Persons; that in this iudgment shall be called into question, especially their sufferings for the kingdom of God, and that which they haue indured for righteousness sake, & in obedience to the Gospell; that in this iudgement the more it shall appeare, that with Patience and Faith, they haue suffred for the kingdome of God, the more they shall be accounted and reputed worthy thereof in Iesus Christ, insomuch as they shall with that praise and glory, before the face of their enemies, be put into the eternall possession thereof, as if they had merited and deserued the same by their sufferings, though the greatest sufferings that euer any Christian hath or can indure, are in deed and truth in themselves no wayes worthy that glory which shall be bestowed vpon them. *Rom. 8. 18.* and it being giuen, is an inheritance. *Matth. 24. 34.* and therefore not of desert. What an vnspeakable

Luc. 21. 36.

able comfort must this needs be in the midst of all persecutions whatsoever, when euery particular wrong and iniurie, which here a man shall indure for the kingdome of God, are so many infallible signes and demonstrations of this iudgment; so that the more they suffer and indure at the hands of men, and the more the Consistories and Iudgement Seats are shut against them, the more cause they haue to be certaine and assured of this iudgement, and the more to reioyce in it. It would be great consolation vnto a Christian heart, and a meanes of much patience and constancie in suffering, if he might be assured, that his cause should come to indifferent hearing, but before men: yet there is far more cause of comfort in the certaine assurance of this iudgement; and so much the more certaine assurance there is of this, by how much the more vncertaintie, doubt and despaire there is of the other.

But this is no matter of Consolation to them that suffer (though with neuer such patience and confidence) for the fancies and inventions of their owne braines, or the superstitious inventions and traditions of men, which appertaine to the kingdome of Sathan and Antichrist. They which will reap this consolation in their sufferings, must look to this, that they suffer for the kingdom of God, i. for their obedience and subiection vnto the lawes of Christ their Head and King, manifested in his word vnto their soules and consciences.

VERS. 6. *For it is iust with God to render in like manner affliction to those which afflict you.*

7. *And to you which are afflicted, rest with vs —*

FOR the further confirmation of them in the aforefaid comfort, he here rendreth a reason, why this Patience and Faith of theirs must needs be a manifest signe of the iust iudgement of God aforefaid; because (saith he) it stands with the iustice of God to afflict them, that afflict his seruants, and to giue rest vnto them which are afflicted for his sake, and therefore the more that any do suffer for the kingdome of God, and the more that the wicked preuaile ouer them, the more certaine and infallible signe it is of that great day. So that in this reason he comprehendeth two grounds of the former assertion.

The first is this: That it stands with the equitie and iustice of God, to afflict and punish them, which molest and trouble his children for righteousness sake. God hath stamp't in man, who is his owne Image, the print of this iustice. Can a Prince indure, that his Seruant should be abused for doing his will and commandement? Will he not take himselfe bound in equitie, so far as his authoritie and lawes will stretch, to call them into question that shall abuse him? If he should carelesly suffer the same, would it not be iudged an vnjust thing? Hath not the righteous God that care of his

his Seruants, that an earthly man hath? Is it possible that he that hath written this point of iustice in the brest of man, should neglect it in his owne Person, and suffer his owne Seruants, for obeying his will, to be persecuted and wronged, and that before his owne face, and put it vp? Yet we see that for the most part in this life he doth so. None more free from iudgement and vengeance then they that persecute Gods Seruants, none liue more merily, none dye with more ease. Why then we must of necessitie conclude, that therefore there must come a day of doome wherein they must answer it. God must needs be a iust Iudge, and therefore the fewer iudgements ouertake the enemies of the Gospell in this life, and the more they triumph ouer Gods Seruants, the more we must learne to comfort our selues, in being so much the more assured and perswaded of this day of iudgement. If there were no other cause to be heard but this, it stands with Gods iustice to heare the same. It would affect and comfort Gods children in their affliction, to behold some present iudgement of God or man, vpon them which persecute them; and it much dismayeth them, when they see no hope of helpe either from God or man in this life. But this ought to strengthen and comfort them so much the more: for this is so much the greater euidence and demonstration, that in this great day of iudgement, the Lord will render affliction to those which trouble his Seruants. This then is the best reuenge, that Christians can execute vpon their persecutors, euen with faith and patience

patience to suffer persecution and affliction at their hands: for the more they suffer, the more they binde the Lord in his iustice, in this day to iudge and reuenge their cause: so that if Christians by dint of sword could subdue all their enemies, they haue not therein such iust matter of comfort, as in their patient & faithfull sufferings. The lesse we reuenge, the more hath God in iustice, bound himselfe to be auenged of them: and it is great folly to thinke, that we can do our enemies more hurt, then God can and will, if we leaue the reuenge vnto him, vnto whom indeed it appertaineth.

The second ground of the former Assertion is this, that as it stands with the iustice of God to punish them that afflict & persecute his seruants; So it stands no lesse with his iustice, to giue vnto his seruants which are troubled and molested, rest and quiet, of which, the lesse hope and assurance there is in this life, the more cause there is, to assure themselves of it in another life, and therefore to expect that day wherein, they shall be put into a full and eternall possession thereof. It is no such comfort to the soule of an afflicted Christian, to be perswaded that God will render vnto the wicked enemies, affliction for affliction, more comfort it would bee vnto them, to see some signes and tokens of their repentance and forgiveness. But this is the strength and life of Christian consolation, that the more sorrow and trouble, that they sustaine for Christs sake and his kingdome, the more pledges and demonstrati-
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ons they haue therein of their owne eternall rest and happinesse; for howbeit our sufferings (as is formerly declared) are farre from meriting any such matter, yet it is iust with God, to giue them rest and quiet, which haue beene content patiently to suffer for his sake; no man shall suffer in vaine for Christ, but the more he suffereth (if hee suffer for the kingdome of Christ) the more securitie and assurance hee hath of eternall rest, in heauen, which all those want, which want that grace; neuer looke thou to enter into this rest, except thou canst with patience and faith indure trouble and disquiet for the kingdome of heauen.

He sheweth what manner of rest this shalbe, by way of comparison, in these words *with vs. i.* It shall be such a rest and quiet, as is prepared for vs that are Apostles and Euangelists, and such, as together with vs you shall certainly enioy; This must needs increase their consolation exceedingly: there are no true Christians, but are perswaded the Apostles and Euangelists shall in this great day be in most happy condition: neither can they desire to be in better estate; wouldst thou then be sure to rest with *Paul, Siluanus, Timothie* and the rest of the Apostles and Euangelists: thou must learne with patience and in Faith, to suffer persecution and tribulation, when the Lord shall call thee thereunto, for that Faith and Religion which thou hast learned of them? for the Lord hath not prepared a higher heauen for them, and a lower for vs, but we shall rest together with them in the same heauen, if together with them we shall suffer

in this life, for that kingdome which they in the Gospell haue called vs vnto.

— *When the Lord Iesus shall bee manifest from heauen, with his mightie Angels.*

8. *In flaming fire—*

That the consideration of the day of doome (the manifest signes whereof they were to behold in their patient induring of persecution) might the more comfort them, and strengthen them in their troubles. The Apostle concludeth this second part of their consolation, with a digression into a description of that day of iudgement, euery part whereof containeth great matter of comfort to all the afflicted and persecuted seruants of God, and no lesse matter of feare and horror to all their enemies, if they had grace to apprehend the same.

The first part of the description declareth who shall be the Iudge: euen our *Lord Iesus* himselfe in his owne Person, euen he who loued his Seruants so dearely, that he gaue his life for them, yea did vndergo his Fathers wrath for them, which was for the time a Hell of Hells vnto him: and therefore the more gracious, and louing and mercifull, he hath shewed himselfe vnto them, the more mercilesse and cruell, will he in this iudgement shew himselfe vnto their aduersaries. Whom could the afflicted Seruants of Christ more desire to sit in iudgement, then their owne deare Saviour, for whose sake they haue suffered so many indignities?

indignities? Whom can the enemies of the Goſpell more feare, then him whom in his Seruants they haue moſt diſhonoured and deſpighted? No doubt but in this day, they would rather chooſe any, to be their Iudge then Chriſt: yea, they would hope for more fauour and mercy from the Diuels themſelues, then from him. Let vs then (if euer the Lord ſhall exerciſe vs in the ſame manner) comfort our ſelues in this, That Chriſt himſelfe will in his owne Perſon, in this day, come to iudge the cauſe betwixt vs and our enemies. It were great matter of conſolation, if we were aſſured but of this, That Chriſt would raiſe vp ſome iuſt man vpon earth to doe it; or ſend a Saint, or an Angell from heauen for that purpoſe; but this muſt needs be an exceeding comfort, That Chriſt in his owne Perſon will come to ſit in iudgement vpon our aduerſaries, and will not put the matter ouer to Vnder-Commiſſioners. Let vs then take heede, leſt in our ſufferings for Chriſts ſake, we breake not out through impatiencie or diſtruſt, into any ſinne againſt Chriſt: for this is the greateſt aduantage that we can giue to our aduerſaries, and a ſigne that we doe not ſo much ſuffer, (how iuſt ſoeuer the cauſe be) for Chriſts ſake, as for our owne fancie: for how can that man ſay, that he ſuffereth for Chriſts ſake, when in his ſuffring for his ſake, he will not for his ſake forbear ſuch and ſuch ſinnes which Chriſt forbids? Can he in his ſuffrings comfort himſelfe in the conſideration of this iudgement, when in and by occaſion of thoſe ſufferings he rebels againſt the Iudge?

The second part of the description of the latter day followeth, wherein is set forth the glorious manner of Christs comming to iudgement, consisting of three parts.

First, he shall manifest himselfe from heauen: i. shall appeare to the eyes and senses not onely of the godly, but the wicked, and they with these eyes of theirs shall behold him comming from the highest heauens, in that maiestie and glory, wherein he now sitteth at the right hand of his Father, and not in that base and contemptible estate, wherein he first shewed himselfe, when he tooke our nature vpon him. So that Christ will sit visibly in iudgement in this day, and that in all the sensible glory that may be: he shall then shew himselfe in all his maiestie to euery mortall eye: then shall the godly behold and see, that their trust and confidence in him, in the midst of all their greatest afflictions, was not in vaine: they shall then haue cause to triumph and glory, that they haue (though through many reproches and contempts) serued so honorable and glorious a Lord. How then shall the wicked enemies of Christ hang downe their heads, that haue scorned and disdained his Seruants, as if they had serued some base and contemptible Master? Verily so vile and base is the seruice of Christ in the eyes of some, (yea and of some that would be reputed Christians) that it were lesse disgrace for a man (in their eyes) to serue a hangman, then to serue Iesus Christ. Iudge you how such will looke, and what they will thinke, when they shall behold Christ comming

comming from heauen, and reuealing himfelfe in all his maieftie and glory, and that to fit in iudgement vpon them? Let this then be our comfort in all our tribulations, that howfoeuer Chrift now haue the heauens drawne as a curtaue, or vaile betweene our eyes and him, which is the caufe that makes the enemies of his Gofpell, fo bold and fawcie with his Seruants, yet that the more he hides himfelfe now from the eyes of persecutors and wicked men, the more gloriously he will manifefte and reueale himfelfe vnto them in this day, to the greater glory of his humbled Seruants, and the greater shame and confufion of all their enemies.

The fecond degree of his glory, confifts in the traine that fhall accompanie and affift him in this iudgement; All the mighty and powerfull Angels of Heauen: Thefe fhall be prefent as fo many Sargeants, Bayliffs, Officers at Armes, Sheriffs and Executioners in this great Affife. If therefore it be fo terrible to guilty prifoners, to behold an earthly Iudge in his fcarlet robes, attended vpon with the Iuftices, Sheriff, and other Officers of Peace, how fearefull and terrible will the fight of this Iudge be, manifefting himfelfe from heauen with fuch a mighty hoft and glorious armie of Angels? If the appearance but of one Angell, and that in peace, hath bin fo terrible, euen vnto Gods owne children, as appears *Luc. 2. 10. & 1. 30. Iudg. 13. 6.* how terrible fhall the appearance of all the Angels in Heauen be vnto the wicked in this day, when they fhall come with Chrift from
heauen

heaven to be executioners of his eternall vengeance vpon them? For their Office at this time, is set downe in the Parable of the tares. *Mat. 13.41.* It is not then possible for them to auoide the presence of this Iudge, but they must needs appeare before him, where there are such Officers, as these, to apprehend and attache them: though they should run into the clefts and hollowes of the rocks, or could cause the mountaines and hills to couer them, these Angels could pull them out: though they had wings like to an Eagle to flie away from this iudgement, these winged Cherubims would ouer-flie them: though all the wicked should conspire and band themselues, as it were one man to resist the proceedings of this Iudge, there is not the weakest of this heavenly armie, but will be found strong enough to binde them hands and feet in chaines & fetters of yron: and therefore the Apostle calls them, powerfull Angels; how truly see *2. King. 19.35. Act. 12.23.* What an incouragement then would the consideration of this be vnto any that are vnder persecution for the kingdome of God, if they had grace but to beleue this? If poore men suffering wrongs at the hands of great men that liue amongst them, could be assured of this, that the King himselfe taketh notice of those wrongs that are offered vnto them, and will without faile vpon such a day come in his owne Person, with all the Court and Councell, Iudges and Officers of State, to call the matter into question, and to sit in iudgement vpon the same, would they not thinke themselues happy, yea

yea and the more wrongs they haue ſuſtained, the more happy, in regard that the more they haue indured, the better they are ſure it will be for them, and the worſe for their enemies? What infidelitie then is this, that we ſhould haue ſo ſure and certaine a word of Chriſts owne comming, and of his comming accompanied with all the glorious and powerfull traine of heavenly Angels, to ſit in iudgement vpon them which ſhall persecute vs, and to giue reſt eternall vnto vs, euen in regard of our troubles, and yet we ſhould murmure, repine, fret, greeue, yea and baſely often denie and forſake the cauſe of Chriſt, rather then ſuffer for it? Is it poſſible (beloued) that any Chriſtian that is perſwaded of this truth, and thinks of it ſeriously, ſhould be daunted or diſquieted, or put out of any of Gods wayes, for the persecution of wicked men, be they neuer ſo mighty, and neuer ſuch politicke aduerſaries, and be they able to ſet neuer ſo great a gloſſe vpon their proceedings? It is to be feared (beloued) that many from time to time, which ſeeme to be moſt forward in the profeſſion of the Goſpell, that thinke this glorious comming of Chriſt with his mighty Angels, to the end and purpoſe here expreſſed, to be no better then ſome old wiues fable: otherwiſe it were not poſſible, that euery feare of trouble & moleſtation ſhould make ſo many ſtart aſide like a broken bowe, from the profeſſion or practiſe of that truth which formerly they haue giuen teſtimonie vnto, but it would rather make them ſo much the more reſolute and confident in the ſame, by how much the
more

more trouble they shall see to pursue the same, or any part thereof.

The third degree of his glorious comming is in the manner thereof, which shall be most fearefull and terrible, euen in *flaming fire*, which sheweth the extremitie of his wrath, against them which he shall come to sit in iudgement against; they are not in jest that sling fire-brands; terrible euen to Gods owne people was his giuing of the Law in thunder & lightning; but a thousand thousand times more terrible will his comming in this fire be, vnto the wicked transgressors of that Law. To haue bin in Sodom and Gomorrah, when fire and brimstone fell downe from heauen vpon them, *Gen. 19*, could not be so terrible as this must be vnto those wicked men, that shall stand vpon the earth in that day, and behold this comming of his, who would then if they might be put vnto it, choose rather to leape into burning *Aetna*, then stand in this presence. Let the consideration of this make vs to run, euen through fire and water, rather then displease this Iudge. Let vs, the more fiery trialls and persecutions that wee shall indure for this Iudges sake, the more rejoyce in the expectation of this his comming, and be armed against the terror of it. Let no flame kindled by the wrath of any man, make vs doe any thing that may prouoke this irefull Iudge.

- *Rendering*

— *Rendering vengeance unto them, that doe not know God, and which obey not the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Christ.*

The third part of the description of the latter day of doome followeth, wherein is set downe the end of Christs glorious comming in manner and forme aforesaid, to iudgement: which is twofold.

1. To render vengeance, or to be reuenged vpon some.

2. To be in a speciall manner glorified vpon other some.

The first act then and end of Christs comming in flaming fire, is to be reuenged vpon some sort of Persons. i. in that manner to proceed in iudgement against them, that those men vse to doe which are possessed with a furious and reuenging Spirit, euen with all rigor and extremitie, to seeke their mischiefe and vtter ruine. For it is the nature of reuenging mindes, to seeke onely the hurt and euill of those which haue prouoked them: and the greater and more powerfull they are, the more fearefull will the vengeance be which they shall inflict. The wrath of a King (saith *Solomon*) is as messengers of death, and like the roaring of a Lyon; what then is the wrath of the King of Kings, the Lyon of the Tribe of Iudah? Verily if a man were naked in the wilderness, and all the Lyons, Lyonesses, and their whelps roaring about him ready to teare him in thousands of peeces,

Pro. 16. 14.
& 19. 12.

it were not so fearefull, nor so much euillnes to be expected, as when this lyon shall roare vpon him, and come in such a fierce and furious manner to be auenged of him; and the more terrible the auenger shewes himselfe to be, the greater vengeance is feared, and the lesse hope of mercy. If we see one come gnashing his teeth at one, and with a furious rage running at him with a naked sword, we presume that the vengeance that this man intends to execute, is no lesse then death, and that the blood of the partie can only quench the flame of his wrath; what then will quench the wrath of this Person, who comes in flaming fire from heauen, with all the powerfull armies of glorious Angels, to be auenged of all his enemies. If the least offendor had 10000 hearts, it were not the blood of them all could quench the fire of this auengers rage against him: If it were possible for him then to weepe a Sea of teares, yet there would be no hope thereby to mitigate the wrath of this auenger, or to moue him to relent, when he shall come in such a manner as this, to render vengeance: then shall the chamber dore be shut, and it will be too late for the foolish Virgins to cry, Lord, Lord, open to vs. *Mat. 25. 11, 12.*

Hence then we are to note.

That howsoeuer in this life the Lord shewes himselfe a miracle of patience, suffering infinite and innumerable indignities and dishonors to be offred, both to himselfe and his seruants, and howsoeuer the wicked enemies of his Church and Gospell, do no more feare his threats in the word, then

then the arrow that a scarcrow threatens to shoot, yet when this day shall come, they shall finde it verified in him, *That patience wounded, becomes furie:* so that the more he hath indured and suffred at their hands in this life, the more wrath and furie shall breake forth against them in this day. This then is the day of the Lords wrath and vengeance, and this is it that Gods children are to expect, and to rest in hope of. They are not to hope & expect, that God will in this world be auenged of their enemies, seeme they neuer so desperate, and incurable: but thus ought euery good Christian to stand affected towards their persecutors and wickedst enemies, to desire their repentance in this life, and to rest satisfied with that vengeance, that this Iudge will be sure (if they repent not) in that day to render vnto them. And surely they doe not belecue the truth of this Gospel as they ought to do, that are their owne auengers, and will not waite this day of the Lord; for if they did not either thinke, that Christ will not at all reuenge their wrongs, or that he will not do it so thorowly and effectually, as their enemies deserue, or that themselves were more wise and able to auenge their cause then Christ, they would not be so hastie and headie as they are, in reuenging their owne wrongs. But such must know, that the lesse patience and faith they haue shewed in those persecutions and wrongs, which haue bin offred vnto them, and the more they haue broken forth into reuenge of their owne quarrels, the more they haue cut off from themselves the comfort of this

Seneca.

doctrine: for in so doing, they haue done so much as lies in them, to preuent the Lords vengeance vpon their enimies, and to pull it vpon their owne heads in this day, insomuch as they haue more cause to feare, that the Lord will come in flaming fire to be auenged of them, rather then their enimies, seeing they in reuenging themselves vpon their enimies contrary to Gods will, haue themselves as much prouoked God, as their enimies haue in wronging them; so that thou canst not doe thine enimie a greater pleasure, then to auenge thy selfe vpon him: for though thou maist in this day see the Lord auenged of him, for the wrongs he hath done thee, yet what comfort will that be to thee, when thou hast cause to feare, that thine enimie also shall see the Lord auenged vpon thee, for reuenging thy selfe vpon him. If Christians in their hor, and vnchristian blood, would but meditate of this, it could not but be a strong bridle and curbe vnto many violent and outragious distempers, that they vse to breake forth into, in the wrongs and iniuries, that are offred vnto them, wherein commonly (through the iust iudgement of God) they often discouer the very same corruption and wickednes, which they reuenge in their enimie, to be in a greater measure in themselves, and in the same kinde in a higher degree, do sinne both against God and their enimie. Is any thing more common, then for men and women, yea Christians, yea speciall professors of the Gospell, in reuenging the pride, the malice, the disdain, the contumelious speeches, furious acts and deeds of others,

others, to discover greater pride, malice, disdain, contumelie and furie in their owne words and deeds? What? Can such comfort themselves, in the consideration of this coming of Christ to render vengeance, to them that haue wronged them, when themselves by this occasion haue shewed themselves, as deep offenders against God and their enimie in the same sin? Such onely then can reap comfort to themselves, in Christs coming to render vengeance, vnto whom that praise is due, which the Apostle here giues to these Thessalonians. i. Such as manifest patience and faith in all their persecutions and afflictions. And if those can haue no comfort herein, which shall through impatiencie and infidelitie reuenge euident wrongs and iniuries; what comfort can they haue, that reuenge themselves vpon their neighbours for imaginarie and conceited wrongs, for doing no more then they may do, yea many times for doing that which they ought to do, and which they should haue answered to God if they had not done.

This vengeance is set forth and declared more specially.

1. By the Subiect.
2. By the Matter.
3. By the Place.

The Subiect of this vengeance are the Persons vpon whom the Lord will execute the same in that day; and they are *such as know not God, or such as obey not the Gospell of our Lord Iesus*. Concerning the first: God is in himselfe of an infinite
and

and incomprehensible maiestie, and therefore cannot perfectly be knowne of Men or Angels. See to this end *1 King. 8. 27. Job 11. 7. Exod. 33. 20. Job. 1. 18. & 5. 37. & 6. 46.* yet he hath in some degree manifested and made knowne himselfe in his workes, wherein men if they were not more brutish then horse or mule, might clearly behold and see, That God is an infinite maiestie, almighty, all-sufficient, the Creator and supreme Gouvernour of the whole world, him, in and through whom they liue and breath and haue their being, the author and fountaine of all goodnesse, most worthy of all honor, obedience, and loue: That he is a God that loueth Religion, truth, honestie, humilitie, iustice, mercy, charitie, loyaltie, chastitie, sobriety, and such like other vertues in men, and will blesse men for the same: That he hateth and detesteth in men, all profanesse, falshood, dishonestie, pride, iniustice, crueltie, oppression, disloyaltie, vncleanesse, drunkenesse, and such like vices, and will curse all them that are giuen vnto them: And that he hath prouided Heauen, a place of euerlasting happinesse, for those that shall doe his will; and Hell, a place of euerlasting torment, for them which shall offend him. To omit many other matters concerning God, which are clearly reuealed in his workes, enen to the senses of men that haue the vse of reason, and do not wilfully shut their eyes against the light: what sauage and brute creatures are all those, that in the midst of these meanes, haue no knowledge of God at all?

That

That this God ſhould be as a ſtranger vnto them, yea as one that they had neuer heard of; that they ſhould haue no ſenſe or apprehenſion of his Maieſtie, Power, and goodneſſe, when all their ſenſes are daily and houely filled with the ſame; that they ſhould liue and delight in thoſe ſinnes, which the very light of their Conſciences tell them are displeaſing to God, and yet be no more afraid of God therefore; then of a painted Beare or Lyon. Were not that a ſtrange childe, that being brought vp from a tender one in the houſe of his Parents, being fed and clothed by them, and euer receiuing from them all the kindneſſes that Parents can yeeld vnto a Childe, and yet this Childe ſhould not ſo much as know them, or looke vpon them, but demeane himſelfe vnto them, as vnto meere ſtrangers, ſuch as he had neuer ſeene nor heard of, paſſing by them without ſo much, as looking towards them, reſpecting the ſeruants and dogges in the houſe more then them, delighting moſt in that which he knoweth will vex and anger them, ha-ting their preſence, and no more affected with any good receiued from them, then with a ſtraw or ruſh; what a monſter of children would euery one iudge this to be? Wert thou the Father or Mother of ſuch a Childe, what wouldſt thou do? Verily, ſuch children are moſt of vs vnto our God. We liue in this world, which is the houſe of our God, yea in his Church, which is his Preſence-chamber, no earthly Father can poſſibly ſhew more kindneſſe to his Childe, then our heavenly Father doth vnto vs, nor can ſo much by his
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Ephes. 2. 12.

kindnes manifest himselfe to be a Father as God doth vnto vs, and vnto all mankind: and yet for all this, we liue as though we knew him not, we neuer looke after him nor regard him, we are no more delighted with his presence, affected with his kindnesse, nor more studious to please him, no more fearefull to displease him, then if he were no bodie, or worse then the worst of all creatures, as if he were one that we neuer receiued, nor expected the least good at his hands, or one that we would not be any wayes beholden vnto though we might; the more he offers vs meanes to know his Maiestie, Power, Goodnes, the more we shut our eyes against them, pleasing and delighting our selues in our ignorance, as a matter of great advantage vnto vs. This is the condition and estate of the greater part of the world, if you looke into their liues and conuersations, they are as it were *without God in the world*, as men that had not the least sense or apprehension of a God, or had neuer heard of him, or that all that they had heard of him were but fables. Is it any maruell then, if the Lord hauing shewed himselfe so kinde and louing a Father vnto all mankind, shall be seuerely auenged of such, as in the midst of so many meanes will not know him? Oh let the consideration of this moue euery one of vs, to bewaile our ignorance, and to seeke after the knowledge of God aboue all things. For if we will not know him in his goodnesse in this life, we shall feele him in his wrath in another life. Ignorance of God in this day of Doome will be no plea for vs; for it shall be

be one of the Articles of condemnation against vs, that we know not God.

The second sort of Persons, that Christ will come in flaming fire to be auenged of, are such as *obey not his Gospell.* i. such as will not accept of those conditions of Saluation that are offred in the Gospell. In the Gospell euerlasting Saluation is offred to all sinners, that will beleue in Christ, forsake their sinnes, and yeeld obedience to the Ordinances of Iesus Christ, set downe in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles; when therefore, God shall out of his word, conuince our consciences that we are sinners, and haue offended his Maiestie by our sinnes, and when God shall offer to be reconciled vnto vs, to pardon and forgieue our sinnes, to saue our soules from Hell, yea to bestow euerlasting happinesse in Heauen vpon vs, if so be we will forsake our sins, acknowledge Christ Iesus, for our Lord and Redeemer, and be subiect to his discipline; when God shall send to this end, his Ministers, Messengers, and Embassadors, to offer vnto vs these conditions, yea to intreat and beseech the acceptance of this Grace, and yet we will not accept of them, we will not haue Christ Iesus to raigne and rule ouer vs, we will not (whatsoever follow vpon it) forsake such, and such sinnes, but whether God will saue, or not saue vs, we are resolved vpon our owne courses, and if we may not be saued without any such conditions, we will not be beholding to God for our Saluation, but will put it to the aduenture, either to haue it vpon what conditions we our

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selues please, or go without it: this is to disobey the Gospell, and to trample the blood of the new Testament vnder our feet: this is directly to sin against Christ Iesus; and therefore such of vs can expect no other Doome from Christ at that day, but fearfull vengeance. For vpon whom should he auenge himselfe, if not vpon them, which cannot content themselves to haue sinned against God, and so to haue prouoked him, but despise the meanes of his grace and fauour when they are offred, purposing still to continue in their sinnes, whatsoeuer come of it. This is the fearfull sin of many that liue in the Church of God, and professe themselves Christians, yea and that looke to be saued by the blood of Christ, who notwithstanding liue and delight (and so purpose to do) in such sins, as they know are forbidden in the Gospell: they can be content, yea they looke for that Saluation by Christ, which is promised in the Gospell, and that the Couenant on Christs part should be performed vnto them, but they are resolved not to keep any Couenant on their owne part. And those for the most part that most disobey the Gospell, and that shew most contempt to the Ministerie and dispensation thereof, and are the greatest enemies that may be to the principall Ordinance thereof, do most presume of that Saluation which therein is offred. But let vs know that it is not a naked profession of the Gospell, or a bare beleeefe that can pacifie the wrath of this Iudge in that day, but it must be such a profession and beleeefe, as manifesteth it selfe in obedience vnto the Gospell.

Gospell. If it were possible for a man (as it is not) truly to professe, and vnfaignedly belecue the Gospell, without obeying of it, yet that shall not saue him, he must obey it also. The Gospell containeth not matter of knowledge and Faith onely, but of practice also: and therefore so many as desire to be free from the vengeance and furie of this Iudge, had need in that regard to be acquainted with the Gospell and all the Ordinances thereof: (for how can they obey that which they know not?) and they had need with all diligence and care to be conuersant in the reading and hearing of the writings of the Euangelists and Apostles, of Moses and the Prophets, for they are they, which testifie of this Gospell, and in them is fully and most clearely declared, what manner of obedience is to be performed thereunto: Also the word here translated, *to obey*, originally signifieth, *to hearken vnto*, which is when we set our selues diligently to heare a matter, that in our owne estimation, much concernes vs to know, either for the procuring of some speciall good vnto vs, or the auoyding of some feared euill, and so it is translated by the best Interpreters, and that neither vnfitly, nor disagreeing in substance from our owne translation. For they can neuer be said to obey the Gospell, that doe not hearken vnto the same, especially when God by his publique Ministers, as it were his Embassadors and Heraulds, proclaimes the same in their Assemblies; and they which haue the grace to hearken after the same as they ought to do, cannot but do their best inde-

uour, to obey the same. Fearefull then must their estate needs be in this day, that are so far from, either obeying or hearkning vnto the Gospell, that of all other Persons, they most hate and despise them which are Messengers of the same, as though their feet, yea and their tongues were accursed, that bring them any tidings thereof.

This Gospell is here called *the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Christ*. It is not (beloued) our owne Gospell which we preach vnto you, and call you vnto the obedience thereof: but it is the Gospell of our Lord and our Sauour, and that which we must submit and subiect our selues vnto, if we looke for Saluation from him. When the Gospell requireth any thing at your hands, which shall any wayes crosse your corrupt desires, you are presently offended, and incensed against vs, that are the poore Ministers thereof, as if it were our owne Gospell, and the law of our owne will which we propound vnto you. But know you this, whosoever you are, that it is Christ Iesus our Sauour, that in our Persons you are offended withall, and against whom you rebell, in despising that Gospell we teach vnto you: know you also that in your obedience and subiection to that Gospell, which we preach vnto you, you are not subiect and obedient vnto vs, but (except you be reprobates) vnto your owne Lord and Sauour, who requireth onely this obedience at your hands, tying the euerlasting saluation of your Soules, and the merits of his passion thereunto.

To conclude this point then: Seeing that Christ will

will come in flaming fire, to be auenged of them that shall not obey his Gospell, let the terror of that fire make vs run through water and fire, rather then disobey the same. And though the Deuill and Antichrist, and all his accursed imps and limmes, should come in flaming fire against vs for obeying this Gospell, yet let vs assure our selues, that it will be more easie for vs a thousand times, to frie in their flames, then to burne in this. The fires that they kindle, do soone go out; and in the greatest heat and sense of them, men haue receiued that comfort, that they haue sung for ioy: but this fire shall neuer be quenched, and he that feeles but the least degree of the heat thereof, is not capable of the least comfort, but in it there shall be euer howling and crying, and gnashing of teeth. And therefore great folly it is, to leap out of the one fire into the other; far greater then if a man, to auoide a showre of raine, should plunge himselfe into a whirlpoole; or for feare of being scalded in a vessell of luke-warme water, should leap into a furnace of boyling lead.

VER. 9. *Which shall be punished with euerlasting perdition —*

Hitherto of the Persons, vpon whom Christ will be auenged in this great day. The matter of his vengeance followeth, which is euerlasting destruction or perdition, that is, the vtter ruine and confusion of the Parties. This is the extremest reuenge, when one seeks after the vtter
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perdition and ouerthrow of them whom he hates. Many haue indured much euill at the hands of auengers, and yet in time haue recovered themselves againe, and held vp their heads: but he that falls into the hands of this auenger, shall neuer be able to hold vp his head againe: for he breathes after the vtter ruine and ouerthrow of the creature, and he is able to effect the same, and therefore will bring it to passe. And yet if this perdition and destruction were temporarie, if in the same, a man might perill, as the beast doth, it were the lesse: but this is an *euermlasting perdition*, wherein a man shall be for euer and euer in destroying, and neuer be destroyed; for euer and euer dying, and neuer dead; for euer and euer burning, and neuer burned. What a horrible condition is this? How would this (if we had grace to beleue it) be as a goade in our sides, to force vs to seeke after the knowledge of God, and to yeeld all possible obedience to the Gospell? The feare of hanging, burning &c, (though they be paines that last but a moment in comparison) is powerfull to restraine many a lewd and wicked nature, from murther, theft, treason, witchcraft &c: but alas, if it were possible for a man, to be hanged or burned a thousand times one after another, all these deaths would be nothing to this destruction. Dost thou then beleue the truth of this which the Apostle here affirmeth? If thou do not, thou art no Christian, but a very Infidell: if thou do beleue it, how comes it to passe that thou seekest no more after the knowledge of God? yea that thou hatest
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to know God, and affectest to be ignorant of him? How commeth it to passe that thou liuest in disobedience of the Gospell, and resoluest so to doe? Though thou couet thy neighbours Oxe and his sheep, yet thou wilt not steale them; though thou malice and hate thy neighbour to the death, yet thou wilt not murther him, because thou perswadest thy selfe that thou shalt be hanged for it, if thou do so; and though there may be some possibilitie of concealing the matter, or of flying from the Iudge, yet thou wilt not put it to the aduventure. Thou saist thou beleueest, that Christ at the latter day will come in flaming fire, to punish with euerlasting perdition, those which know not God, and which obey not the Gospell of Iesus Christ, and yet thou art ignorant of God, and despisest the Gospell, which plainly manifesteth, that thou esteemest of this which the Apostle here affirmeth, as an old wifes fable, whatsoever thou pretendest to the contrary, and therefore that thou art but a masked Infidell. But they that will not beleue this doctrine, shall one day, to their eternall horror, fee the truth of it. Let so many of vs, as feare the Lord, and tremble at his word, often meditate of this: If a man should be condemned to lye for a thousand yeares together vpon a soft fether-bed, and during all that time should heare nothing, but the sweetest musicke that may be, yet he would choose rather to dye a dogs death, then to indure the wearisomnesse thereof: how shall a man then beare this Iudgement, to lye in the burning lake of Gods wrath, in vnspeakable torment,

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not for a thousand yeares, but for euer and euer? If an houre in torment seeme a yeare, how long will this houre seeme, that shall neuer haue end? But when a man hath indured it, as many thousands of yeares, as there be starres in the beauen, or drops of water in the Sea, yet he shall be no more neere his end, then he was at the very first moment of his torment. Those, that are but common and indifferent wise men amongst vs, vse to dislike and condemne the courses of those mens liues, (how iolly and pleasant soeuer they be in the same) whereby they hazard and ruinate their estates, and follow desperate and break-neck courses, by meanes whereof, their liberties and liues are indangered: oh that any Christians then should be so brutish and without vnderstanding, as to approue either in themselues or others, those wayes and courses, that directly lead a man, bodie and soule to this eternall ruine.

— *from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.*

The third Argument, whereby he amplifieth the reuenge aforesaid, is from the place wherein they which know not God, nor obey the Gospell, shall suffer eternall destruction, which is here described by the priuation of Gods presence, and of the glory of his power. The meaning whereof is thus much. That they shall for euer and euer be tormented in such a place, where they shall be euer remoued from the gracious presence of God, and shall

shall neuer behold that glorious power of his, which he manifesteth in the eternall glorifying and blessing of his Saints in heauen: such shall be the detestation and hatred that the Lord shall beare towards them, that he will not indure them to abide in his presence, but will shut them vp in eternall darknes, where the light of his gracious countenance, and his sauing power (which is *the glory of his power*) shall neuer shine vnto them; so that the Lord will neuer looke after them, neuer come vnto them, neuer so much as cast his eye towards them, nor the place where they are: nor shew the least part of his glorious power in that place, to the mitigating of their torment, but will leaue them altogether to the power of the Deuill, and to the comfortlesse presence of damned Spirits, where they shall see nothing, but horroure and confusion, nor heare any thing, but howling and crying and gnashing of teeth, without the least hope of any comfort from God, out of whose presence, they are for euer and euer excluded and thrust out. What a fearfull vengeance is this, that Christ in that day will execute vpon the wicked persons aboue described? How should the consideration of this, restraine all good Christians from reuenging their owne quarrels vpon the enemies of the Gospell, though they had neuer so much power to do the same? For can a Christian heart desire a greater vengeance then this, vpon any how wicked soeuer, and what wrongs soeuer they had done them? If God should giue vp our enimies into our owne hands to do with them

what we would, would we if we could, be more auenged of them, then Christ will be for our sake? Certainly it is not possible for the most malicious curser and banner that euer was, to desire a greater vengeance then this. How wonderfull malicious then are all such, as professe that they beleeeue thus much, & yet thinke it not inough, vnlesse they also may adde something more vnto this vengeance? It is a world to see how Christians vpon euery trifling occasion, are ready to flie at the faces of them which trespasse against them, and against the expresse will of God, to reuenge their owne causes, as though either they did not beleeeue, that Christ would execute any such vengeance vpon them, or that if he would, yet that it were not vengeance inough for any trespasse committed against their persons. Whensoever therefore any enemies of the Gospell, shall offer wrong vnto vs in words or deeds, let vs leaue the reuenge to this Iudge, who will either in this life make them repent it, (yea more repent it then we could make them, though we had power to hang them for it) or else he will make them eternally to rue it in the world to come, which is a greater vengeance, then the most spitefull and malicious stomacke that euer was (if he knew or beleeeued what it was) could wish vnto him, he hateth to the death. If a man for some pettie trifling wrong done vnto any of vs, should by the Magistrate be cast into prison for our sake, there to be reserued till the generall Assises, then to be hanged without any hope of pardon, except he yeelded full satisfaction vnto vs,

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as much euery way as we would require, would not this punishment content vs? Would we not (if we had any good nature in vs) be griened that he should for our cause suffer so much? Were we not monstrously malicious, if notwithstanding all this, we should desire to be farther auenged of him, by reuiling and beating him in the prison, by misvsing him in his wife, children, goods, and good name, all that we can? There is not (belo-ued) any man, that doth offer vs the least wrong, but Christ our Lord, doth thereupon binde him by stronger bonds, then if he were in fetters or stocks, to be forth comming at the great day of Doome, and then purposeth to be reuenged on him, in the extremest manner, euen with eternall destruction, from the presence of his face, except he truly and vnfainedly repent. And is not this inough to content vs? Are our hearts so full of rancor and spite, that notwithstanding that we know and beleue thus much, yet we cannot be quiet in our mindes, except we our selues also flie vpon him that hath wronged vs, euilly intreating him in words and deeds? Should it not rather pitie vs, to consider, that for our sake, and for that he hath done to vs, he should be in danger, to be eternally damned in Hell? Let this malice be far from all Christian hearts, and that it may be far from ours, let vs often meditate vpon this first end of Christs comming to iudgement.

VERS. 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be made wonderfull in all them that beleue —*

IN these words are contained the second end of Christs comming to iudgement, which is the glorifying of his Saints. The violence of his rage and furie against the wicked, doth not make him forget his grace & loue to the godly, but the more he shall in that day manifest his wrath and furie against the one, the more shall his wonderfull grace and loue breake forth towards the other.

To be glorified in his Saints, and to be made wonderfull in them that beleue, is in such a manner to glorifie them, that all the world shall wonder and be astonished at that vnspeakable glory, wherewith he will glorifie them, and in their glory, glorifie himselfe. But what! Will not Christ also be glorified and made wonderfull in the damnation of the wicked? Yes, out of all question, the Lord shall reap wonderfull glory in the vengeance that he shall execute vpon them. The wrath of Christ shall be a wonderfull wrath, the torments and iudgements inflicted vpon them shall be wonderfull; men will then wonder, and be astonished with wondering, that that God, who in this life hath shewed himselfe so patient and gentle vnto sinners, should be so exceedingly wroth with them: the wicked themselues will wonder at his furie, and happily at their owne gracelesse folly, in despising the meanes of their
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owne Saluation: the godly ſhall wonder at the moſt glorious iuſtice of God, and magnifie him for the ſame: yea the confuſion of the wicked in this day, ſhall be one part of that glory whereby the Lord will be made wonderfull in his owne Saints. For, for their ſake, & the wrongs that they haue offered vnto them, ſhall their iudgement be the heauier; but there will be incomparable more cauſe of glorifying God, and of wondring at the glory of his Maieſtie in the Saluation of beleeuers: for alas, the wicked in that day, ſhall haue but their deſerts: but this is the wonder of wonders, that the Lord ſhould beſtow ſuch infinite and exceeding glory, vpon thoſe that beleeue, without the leaſt merit on their part: yea when on their owne part, they haue deſerued the ſame vengeance, that is inflicted vpon the reprobate. What a glory muſt this needs be vnto Chriſt? How ſhall it fill the mouthes of all the Saints and Angels in heauen with the praifes of this God? How ſhall the Saints ſeeing their owne glory, and the glory one of another, wonder at their owne glory, wonder at the glory one of another, and wonder at the incomprehenſible loue of God towards them therein? How ſhall the Potentates and great Princes of the earth, that haue deſpiſed and trampled vnder their feet in this world, the poore ſeruants of Chriſt, now wonder at their glory? How ſhall all the Devils and damned reprobates, to their greater torment, wonder and be amaſed thereat? Oh how wonderfull ſhall the Lord be in this day, to all the world, in that glory, which

which then he will bestow vpon his despised and contemned Seruants.

Howsoeuer then the Lord in this world, doth glorifie himselfe by many meanes, howsoeuer he is glorious and wonderfull, not onely in the creation of the world, but also in the generall & particular gouernment thereof: yet in this day, he will exceed in glorifying himselfe, in & by that speciall glorie, that he will then bestow vpon his seruants. All his glory shalbe their glory, & he will be made glorious & wōderful, by the reflectiō of that wonderful glory which in that day he wil bestow vpon them.

But what Persons are they that Christ will bee glorified and made wonderfull in ? *Saints and beleeuers* : Saints and beleeuers are all one ; A man cannot be a Saint, that is not a true beleeuer: and he doth not truly beleeue, who doth not so beleeue, as that vpon the same he become a Saint. A Saint then is he, who euen in this life forsaketh his sins, and endeuoureth to serue and please God, according to his owne will reuealed in the Gospell ; To beleeue, is in that effectuall manner, to know and giue credit vnto the doctrine of the Gospell, and the promises thereof, as that we are willing to yeeld all obedience therein required, to God for Christs sake ; To beleeue, is it that makes a Saint ; To be a Saint, manifesteth that a man beleeueth ; That beliefe is no beliefe that makes not a Saint ; That Saint is a Deuill that doth not beleeue. Will any of vs then (beloued) be assured, whether in that great day, we shall be amongst the number of them that Christ will bee glorified in : wee must examine

Act. 15. 9.

Iam. 2. 14. 18.

examine our selues, whether we be Saints and beleeuers, whether we be beleeuing Saints, and holy beleeuers; doe we giue no credit to the Gospell? Doe we wilfully disobey the same? Doe we delight in prophanenesse, and such like sinnes, contrary to the doctrine of the Gospell? Cannot the voice of Christ in the Gospell, either by threatnings or promises, restraints vs from vnholie and vn-saint-like courses, from our prophanations of the Sabbath, our blaspheming, drunkennesse, scurrilitie, maliciousnesse? &c. Are we scorers and deriders of them that refrain from our ouer prophane courses? Doe we despise and hate and persecute as much as lieth in vs, the most effectuell meanes whereby men become Saints and beleeuers? If we be such, (as it is to be feared that some of vs are little better then such) the Deuils and damned wretches in hell, haue as much cause as we, to hope that Christ will be glorified and made wonderfull in them; Neither can we (so long as we remaine such) expect that the Lord in this day, should any otherwise be glorified, and made wonderfull in vs, then in the Deuill, and all reprobate persons.

This doctrine being beleued, will be a meanes of much comfort to the afflicted and persecuted Saints of God; It is a matter of great humiliation vnto them in such times of persecution, to consider how the name of God is dishonoured and prophaned by the Enemies of the Gospell, and how they insult and triumph ouer Christ, and his holy ordinances; It grieues their soules and humbles them often, vnto the very dust, that Christ will no
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more shew himsele in his owne causes. Also, the consideration of their owne weakenesses and infirmities, which in such times they cannot hide, (whereby they are often a reproch and dishonour to Iesus Christ, and a meanes of triumph and glory to the enemies of Christ) doth much dismay them; but the more Christ suffers himsele to be reproched, and dishonoured in his Saints in this life, and the more the wicked do glory and triumph ouer their basenes and infirmities, the more will he to the wonderment of all the world glorifie them, and glorifie himsele in them; that which he withholds in this life, he will pay with infinite vsurie and aduantage in this day, if we can patiently wait vntill then. And thus much of the description of the day of Doome, into which the Apostle for the further consolation of this persecuted Church did digresse.

— *Because our testimonie was beleued of you in that day.*

Here the Apostle returneth againe to that point, which a litle he digressed from: for hauing in the beginning of the seuenth verse, affirmed thus much in effect; That it was righteous with God, that they which were molested and troubled by wicked men for the Gospels sake in this life, should rest with the Euangelists and Apostles in the life to come; he here rendreth a reason thereof; *Because our testimonie was beleued of you in that day.* By *their testimonie*, he meaneth the doctrine of the Gospel

Gospell which they preached, the substance where of, is contained in their writings. This is it they testified of, and the testimonie they giue thereof, ought to be the ground and foundation of euery Christians beleefe. There is no other doctrine of Saluation, that a Christian ought to beleefe, but what the Apostles and Euangelists giue testimonie of; That which hath not their tongue, or hand, or seale at it, doth not appertaine to the Christian Faith: yea, if our beliete of the principall parts of the Gospell, be grounded onely vpon custome, heare-say, or tradition from our Auncestors, and not vpon their testimonie, it is but a fanlie and no sound beleefe, no, though we should giue our bodies to the fire, to be burned for the same.

Would we then be sure (whatsoever betide vs in this life) to rest after this life, for euer and euer with the Apostles, and be partakers with them in that glorious estate, that we perswade our selues they are in? Let vs beleefe their testimonie, and so farre forth as we beleefe the same, one may be assured to rest with them, and the more disquietnesse and restlesnesse, we indure in this life for beleeuing them, the more we may secure our selues after this life to rest with them: little hope can they haue to enter into this rest, whose greatest hope, lies in the beleefe of that the Apostles neuer gaue any testimony vnto. The superstitious ignorant Papist lookes to rest with the Apostles, for going on Pilgrimage, for his worshipping of Saints & Angels, for his praying vnto our Lady, for his whipping of himselfe, for his praying for the dead, for forbear-

*Col. 2. 20. 21.
22. 23. 16.
Mat. 15. 9.*

ing to eate flesh vpon Fridayes and Saturdayes, and such like will-worship; whose testimonie doe they beleue herein? Not the Euangelists and Apostles; They no where giue any testimonie vnto any such matters, but rather testifie against them; The like may be said of others, who though in words they professe, that they beleue the doctrine of the Apostles, yet in their deeds they giue the lie thereunto, so liuing, as if that which the Apostles haue preached or written, were but so many fables; To goe no further, we haue heard the Apostle testifie in this very place, That in the latter day, Christ will come in flaming fire to render vengeance vnto them that know not God, and obey not the Gospell of Iesus Christ; would we not, if we did beleue this testimonie, striue by all meanes to attaine vnto the knowledge of God, & to yeeld all due obedience to the Gospell? Would we please our selues (as we doe) in ignorance of God, and purposely continue in disobedience and rebellion against the Gospell, if we did beleue this testimonie? It is not possible; Well, we must know, that we must neuer looke to enter into rest, with the Apostles, so long as in this manner we shall refuse to beleue their testimonie. And thus much of the second part of the Apostles Consolation.

VERS. II. Wherefore we also pray alwayes for you—

THe third part of the Apostles consolation followeth, wherein; First, he certifieth this Church,

Church, that He, and *Siluanus*, and *Timothie* doe alwayes pray for them; i. doe daily in their ordinarie and extraordinarie prayers remember their afflicted state vnto the Lord, and become humble and incessant suiters and suppliants vnto Christ Iesus for them. And was not this (thinke we) matter of great comfort vnto them, that such Worthies as these, so deepe in grace and fauour with God, should so take their afflictions to heart, that they should become daily, and continuall petitioners vnto God for them, neuer giuing the Lord any rest, vntill he should heare them and grant their requests? If poore oppressed subiects, that should indure daily wrongs and molestations from great men, should be assuredly certified of this, that some speciall Fauourites about the King, did take notice of the wrongs, and iniuries that were offred vnto them, and did daily sollicite the King to releue them, would it not be a great matter of comfort vnto them? would they not conceiue hope, that at length they should haue some remedie against their oppressors? Much more might these poor persecuted Saints in this Church comfort & hearten themselves in the midst of all their miserie, to consider that they had such continually to supplicate for them, who could preuaile as much with God, as if *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Iob* should haue stood vp, and haue intreated the Lord in their behalfe, especially seeing they could not be ignorant, but that the prayers of men so faithfull, must needs preuaile exceedingly with God.

Iam. 5.16.

First in that *Paul* (to the end that he might comfort them) certifieth them that he prayeth for them; it sheweth that himselfe was perswaded, that they were the better for his prayers, and that he assured himselfe, that they so esteemed themselves to be. Though therefore it should be farre from Christians, to be proud and conceited of their prayers, yet we cannot pray either for our selues or others with that earnestnesse and seruencie of spirit that we ought, except we esteeme our prayers certaine and sure instruments of blessings vnto others. And this should be the solace and ioy of euery poore Christian soule, that thirsteth after the good and welfare of his neighbour, that though we be not able to do them that we loue and wish well vnto, any other good, yet we may pray for them, and in praying for them, we shall do them good worthy thanks. Let vs further learne, not onely to esteeme well of our owne prayers for others, but of the prayers of others for our selues: let vs make no question but that we fare the better for the weakest prayers, that proceed from a faithfull and good heart; let their hands be deare and precious vnto vs, that are lifted vp vnto God for vs. We dearly affect (if we haue any good nature in vs) those which in our necessities will speake a good word for vs to our Superiours vpon Earth: how deare then should they be vnto vs, that in our miserie speake vnto God in our behalfe?

Secondly, let no man thinke himselfe too good to pray & that continually for the poore distressed
Saints

Saints of God. Wert thou as good as *Paul* or *Peter*, as great as *Solomon* or *David*, it will become thee to beg at the Throne of Gods grace for thy poore brethren; yea the better thou art, and the worthier in the eyes of God and man, the better will this dutie become thee, and the more fitting it will be for thee to performe the same. For the more that a man is in grace and fauour with God, the more he ought to be humbled with the sense of his brothers wants, and should the more vse that interest which he hath with God for their reliefe. And as no man ought to thinke himselfe too good to pray for his brethren, though he were as good as *Paul* himselfe; so ought none, how holy soeuer, thinke themselves too good to be prayed for. What a worthy Church was this? How did *Paul* magnifie it? yet, it stood in neede of continuall prayers, and *Paul* for their comfort tells them, that he doth pray continually for them, whereby he declareth, that they desired the same; yea, Christians the better they are, the more they see their owne wants, and the neede of the prayers of others. How often doth *Paul* himselfe beg the prayers of the poore Saints for himselfe? See for this end *Rom.* 15. 30, 31. and the third Chap of this Epistle and the third verse; of which matter I shall haue more fit occasion to intreat vpon that place.

Thirdly, all Christians (after the example of *Paul* in this place) should in all their prayers be in a speciall manner mindfull of those Christians, that are vnder the crosse, whether by persecution,
or

or any other tribulations, as this Church was at this instant. Oh beloued, we should euer carry them in our bowels and hearts, and neuer come into Gods presence, but we should haue them in our mouthes, and commend their estate vnto God. For no persons are in so great danger as they, none feele the want of our prayers so much as they, none reap so much fruit and comfort by our prayers, as they. Litle know we (beloued) how much good we may doe them by our prayers. Though we cannot by our prayers pull downe visible and sensible vengeance, vpon the heads of their persecutors, though we cannot by meanes of them, open the prison gates, and shake off their fetters, or turne the hearts of their enemies and them that molest them, yet some blessing or other we may be assured to procure vnto them. For either the Lord, by this meanes will in his good time remoue the crosse, or mitigate it, or ~~give~~ comfort in it, or strength and patience to beare it, or not suffer them to fall so greuously vnder it, or bestow some better grace vpon them, then that which the crosse depriueth them of; we may presume, that some way or other, they shall fare the better for our prayers, and that they shall neuer returne vnto vs in vaine. And therefore, if there be any bowels of mercy and compassion in vs, towards them that are in distresse, it should moue vs euer to remember them vnto God, neuer to go to God in prayer, but to carry a minde with vs deeply possessed with their miseries, that the Lord may see it, and euen in pitie and compassion towards vs, may shew
some

ſome pitie to them, as it is his nature ſo to doe.

Fourthly, it is the dutie of Chriſtians, not onely to obſerue a conſtant and perpetuall courſe in prayer daily, but in thoſe prayers, not to remember our ſelues onely, but our brethren alſo; and in thoſe prayers which we make, we muſt not looke to receiue the grace, either vpon our firſt asking, or for once asking; no, though our prayers, were neuer ſo faithfull and ſeruent, and though we were neuer ſo great in Gods fauour: but we muſt waite the Lords leiſure, and craue againe and againe; yea continually, for that grace which we deſire, either for our ſelues or others, and neuer ceaſe praying vntill we haue obtained it, or that the Lord hath euidently declared, that it is not his will to grant it vnto vs: and though for many weekes and moneths, and yeares together, we haue bin ſuiters vnto the Lord, and giuen all attendance at the gate of his mercy; though we haue daily renewed our ſuite, and continually put the Lord in remembrance thereof; though we haue others alſo (were they Prophets and Apoſtles) daily for many yeares together ſuing for vs, and yet we haue receiued no answer from God, yet ſo long as God doth not flatly denie our requeſt, and doth not forbid vs to make the ſame, let vs not thinke much to waite the Lords leiſure, but let vs ſtill in hope daily renew our ſuits vnto him, for in ſo doing, we ſhall be ſure in the end to be no looſers, by waiting the good pleaſure of God.

- That

— *That our Lord would make you worthy this Calling.*

Secondly, for the further comfort of this Church, he setteth downe the speciall matter and contents of his prayers, containing 3 petitions.

The first petition, (according to the true meaning thereof) is this, That as the Lord had vouchsafed them this honourable Calling to be Christians, and had giuen them grace, euen to suffer for Christ, and therein giuen them a pledge of their eternall glory with Christ: so it would please the Lord to direct them, and in that mannar to be present with them, especially in these times of tryall and persecution, that they may approue and shew themselves before God and men, to be worthy Christians, and that they may not in word or deed, through frailtie and infirmitie, doe any thing that may blemish and staine their profession, or that may be vnbeseeeming or vnworthy the name of Christians. He doth not then so much intreat the Lord, to free them from trouble and persecution, and to deliuer them from their enemies, as that they may acquit and behaue themselves worthily and valiantly, as it becommeth the souldiers of Iesus Christ. A prayer very necessarie for such times and persons. Our experience will serue to teach vs, how many Christians in time of peace and prosperitie, haue made a worthy and glorious profession, which in time of persecution and troubles haue discovered much vnworthinesse; yea many

many for a good time, haue in the midst of many tryals shewed themselues worthy Confessors, who yet in the end haue fallen grievously, & haue therein exceedingly blemished their profession. It is not therefore sufficient for men to be Christians, but they must endeavour to be worthy of that Calling, that is, to be worthy Christians.

The worthines of a Christian consists in these points.

1. When he doth not satisfie himselfe with a verball profession of Christianitie (as most Christians vse to do) but is a Christian in practice, and when he strives that his practice doth rather exceed his profession, then come short of the same, and that in the eyes of the very enemies and persecutors of the Gospell.

*Iam. 1. 16. & 2.
14. 18.*

2. When a man prizeth this Calling aboue all other Callings, honors and dignities whatsoever, making no reckoning or account of them, when they any wayes crosse or disgrace this, but with *Paul* counting all things losse for this gaine, more respecting his dutie to Christ, then to Father, Mother, Wife, or Children. This is to be a worthy Christian, especially when he can manifest this affection in the midst of persecution.

3. When men strive after perfection in Christianitie, and are not content to be halfe Christians, like *Agrippa*, contenting themselues with a mediocritie and indifferencie in Religion, but euery day striving to grow and increase in this Calling, and so much the more to strive to grow and increase, by how much the more the enemies of the Gospell

Act: 26. 29.

shall go about to diminish and decrease the power of godlinesse in them, when in despite of all Gods enemies, they labour euery day to be better Christians then other, neuer thinking that they are come to a perfection in Christianitie.

4. When Christians labour after all things, that may grace and honour their Calling, and aboue all things auoide those things which may blemish and staine the same, when men so liue, that their Religion doth not onely credit them, but they credit it.

5. To esteeme it their glory and honour, to suffer for it, and to reioyce therein, as the Apostles did, and in that regard, the more they are molested and persecuted for it, the more to cleaue vnto it, to grow and increase in it, to shine by it, and by
Aa. 7. and in all the graces that accompanie it, as *Steuens* did.

6. The more worthy they haue shewed themselves, the more to giue the glory vnto God, and to acknowledge themselves the more indebted vnto him, for their very worthines; for it is that, makes men worthy this Calling, as appears by this prayer, and the more worthy hee makes vs, the more in our selues we should be humbled, that of our selues we should be so vnworthy.

For these and such like properties doth the Apostle pray in this petition, which Grace, who soeuer in time of persecution shall obtaine from God, he shall thereby more vex, disquiet, plague, torment, and confound the enemies of the Gospell which persecute him, then by any bodily reuenge whatsoever.

ſoeuer. If the Lord ſhould deliuer our wicked enemies into our hands to do with them what we liſt, if we ſhould make them our villaines and ſlaues, and put them to the baſeſt ſeruices and vſes that might be, though it might be a meanes the more to humble them, yet nothing in this life can ſo much torment and torture them, as when the Chriſtians that are vnder their hands, do in the manner aforeſaid, worthily behaue themſelues, and as becommeth them that are called to be Seruants of Ieſus Chriſt. And on the contrary ſide, if Chriſtians ſhould ſet themſelues to do the enemies of God the greateſt pleaſure they can, and to miniſter vnto them matter of greateſt triumph and glory vnto them, and that which may moſt fleſh them in their wickednes, and hearten them in all their lewd and wicked courſes; they cannot effect it by any meanes ſo ſoone, as by ſhewing themſelues, whileſt they are vnder their hands, vnworthy Chriſtians: for this is the top and height of all their deſires, to make the Seruants of Chriſt as vile and vnworthy beaſts as themſelues. That we may therefore obtaine this Grace at Gods hands, for our ſelues and others, we muſt pray for it, yea continually pray for it, as the Apoſtle doth, eſpecially in time of perſecution.

— *And that he may fulfill all the good pleaſure of his goodnes.*

The two other petitions following, concerne the meanes whereby the Lord maketh them, and

all other Christians worthy of that Calling.

This then is the second petition, that God would fulfill or accomplish in them the good pleasure of his goodnes. 1. That to the end they might shew themselves worthy to be called Christians, he prayeth, That the Lord would neuer forsake them nor leaue them, especially in these times of tryall, but as hitherto in his infinite goodnes, he had shewed himselfe a louing God vnto them, so he would continue to manifest more and more his loue and good pleasure towards them, not giuing ouer the worke of his sauing grace in them, vntill he had fully accomplished the same, and that they had attained (through the midst of all temptations and discouragements) vnto the fruit and perfection of their Hope and Faith.

But what need *Paul* pray, and that incessantly, that the good pleasure of Gods goodnes may be fulfilled? Is there any question, but that God being infinite and omnipotent, will fulfill the good pleasure of his goodnes? What man is there, but he will be sure to haue his will, if he be not hindred? But we may as well aske, what neede we haue to pray for any thing as well as this, for we know before hand, that there is no good that we can obtaine from God by prayer, but it is the good pleasure of his goodnes, and that before all eternitie, that we should obtaine it, and it is not our prayers, that begetteth this good pleasure in him, but his owne meere free will and disposition. This then is the diuine ordinance of God, that men should pray, and that daily, that the good pleasure of his
goodnes

goodnes may be fulfilled in them, and by this meanes hath the Lord ordained to conuey vnto vs all thoſe graces which flow from his goodnes. So that though we were neuer ſo certaine, that it is the will and good pleaſure of God, to beſtow this or that grace vpon vs, yet we are to know this withall, that it is his will alſo, that we ſhould, by our earneſt prayers, draw the ſame from him.

From this petition we may obſerue.

1. That all the ſtrength and ſtay of a Chriſtian (in time of perſecution and tryall eſpecially) depends vpon the good will and pleaſure of God: if he do not from it receiue grace and ſtrength of perſeuerance, he is gone; he can neuer be able to ſtand and hold vp his head in the day of trouble.

2. That this good pleaſure of God, ariſeth not from any goodnes in vs; but the fountaine from which it ſtreameth, is, his owne meere goodneſſe, and therefore it is here called, *the good pleaſure of his goodnes*. Thence onely it is, that he either decreeth, purpoſeth or willeth any good vnto vs: yea this good pleaſure of his goodnes, is the cauſe of all that goodnes and worthineſſe whatſoeuer is in vs. God doth not manifeſt to a Chriſtian, his good will and pleaſure towards him all at once, but by certaine degrees: neither are the firſt beginnings of that grace, which flow from the good will and fauour of God, ſufficient to ſupport a Chriſtian in perſecution, but the Lord muſt adde grace vnto grace, and ſtrength vnto ſtrength, vntill he haue fulfilled all the good pleaſure of his goodnes.

goodnes. And therefore in such times, we had neede so to behaue our selues towards the Lord, that he may multiply, increase, and bring to perfection, the worke of his good pleasure and goodnes in vs. We had neede then to beg and craue it at Gods hand, and rest vpon it as our onely hope, which if we can do, no doubt but that the more, the enemies of God shall accomplish the lewd pleasures of their wickednes vpon vs, the more we shall feele God, fulfilling the work of his good pleasure in vs, which will more strengthen and incourage vs, to be constant in the Faith of Iesus Christ, and to suffer for it, then if we should receiue speciall incouragement, & applauses from all the Saints in heauen and earth.

— *And the worke of faith in power.*

The third petition is, that God would fulfill in them the worke of faith with power, which is another speciall meanes, whereby they may become worthy of the Calling aforesaid: yea, and whereby the Lord doth accomplish in them, the good pleasure of his goodnes.

There is no doubt or question, but by Faith here he meaneth, iustifying or sauing Faith, that very kinde of Faith, which formerly he said did superabound in them, and was exceedingly increased.

Learne we briefly from hence.

1. That there are degrees of Faith, and that not the beginnings, but euery degree of Faith is the worke

worke of God, yea one of the moſt powerfull works of God. So that it is no more in the power of man to beleue, or in beleeuing to increaſe his owne Faith, then it is to climbe vp to heauen. Faith and euery degree thereof, is wrought onely by the finger of God; and our natures are ſo incapable of it, that God is faine by a diuine and almighty power, to imprint euery part and degree thereof in vs.

2. Though we had made neuer ſo great proceedings in Faith, yet we can neuer in this life be ſaid to come to that perfection in Faith, but that we ſhall haue need to make this prayer vnto the Lord, to fulfill in vs the worke of Faith: yea, the more our Faith is growne and increaſed in vs, the more we ſhall deſire ſtill the perfection thereof. This Church (as we heard) is commended by the Apoſtle, for that their Faith was exceedingly increaſed, and yet the Apoſtle prayeth continually for them, that the worke of Faith may be fulfilled in them. So that though we had neuer ſo much Faith, yet we ſhall need more and deſire more; and it is a fearefull ſigne, that thoſe haue no Faith in them, which think they haue ſo much, as they need no more, deſpiſing all thoſe meanes, whereby their Faith may be increaſed.

3. Faith is the moſt neceſſarie good, that Chriſtians in time of perſecution, ſtand in need of. By our prayers to free them from perſecution, or to inchaunt their bodies, that they could feele no paine nor hurt, either by ſword or fire from their wicked perſecutors, were not to obtaine ſo great a
grace

grace for them, as the accomplishment of their faith. For faith doth supply whatsoever is needfull to giue a Christian strength and comfort in persecution. By it not onely the fiery darts of Sathan are quenched, but the swords and speares and darts of all the wicked Tyrants in the world are so blunted and dulled, that though they pierce, yet they cannot hurt, the partie that is armed therewith. It is an inchaunted shield, that can beare of the most mortall blow: for the more we shall suffer for Christs sake and the Gospell, the more by faith we shall be secured and assured, of a blessed reward that shall infinitely surpasse in worth and weight, any thing, which either we shall, or can possibly suffer in our flesh by the hands of wicked men. Faith, will make vs to see, that it is an aduantage and gaine vnto vs, to lose for Christs sake, and that the greater things that we shall forgo and part with, the greater benefit it shall be for vs; and that the more we shall suffer for him (though to the death) the more we shall be glorified with him. Read the 11 to the *Hebrewes*, and consider the power and vertue of Faith, how through it, Christians haue endured mockings, scourgings, bonds, imprisonment, stoning, the racke, and would not be deliuered, that they might receiue a better resurrection. *Heb. 11. 35, 36, 37.*

VERS. 12.

VERS. 12. *That the name of our Lord Iesus Christ may be glorified in you, and yee in him, according to the grace of our God, and of the Lord Iesus Christ.*

THese words containe the maine ground and reason by which he moueth the Lord to grant the former petitions, and by which he perswaded himselfe, and conceiued hope that the Lord would grant the same vnto them. For by this meanes, Christ Iesus should receiue glory and honour by them, in the very face of his enemies; and they againe, through the free fauour and loue of God, should be glorified in him.

Whence we may learne,

1. That this holy intent and desire here specified, is a speciall meanes to moue the Lord by prayer to grant the former requests: and that the Graces in the former petitions, are the meanes, whereby the name of Christ is glorified in vs, and we in him; and that being destitute of the former graces, specially in time of tryall, Christs name shall be dishonoured by vs, and we shall pull shame and dishonour vpon our selues.

2. The first and maine scope of a Christian, is to glorifie the name of Christ, and not to looke to be glorified in Christ, but in and through his owne glorifying of Christ; yea we are to desire the glory of Christ, when it seemes to fight against our owne glorification in him, as *Moses* did, *Exod. 32. 35*; and *Paul*, when he desired in the affection he

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did

did beare to the glory of Christ, to be *Anathema* for the people of the Iewes. We may, and we ought to desire to be glorified in Christ, but we must first desire and indeauour, that Christ may be glorified in vs, and receiue honour in our seruing and worshipping of him.

3. Though God be neuer so glorified in vs, and though our glory in him is a consequent of our glorifying of him, yet our glory (as appeares here) comes not of any merit of ours, but of the meere grace and fauour of God, and of our Lord Iesus Christ. So that when we haue brought all the glory we can to the name of Christ, if God in

Christ were not gracious and mercifull
vnto vs, we should not for all
that be glorified in

CHRIST.

And thus much of the third part of
this Epistle.



THE SECOND CHAPTER.

- Verf. 1. *We beſeech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, and by our aſſembling vnto him,*
2. *That yee be not ſuddainly moued from your minde, nor troubled, neither by ſpirit, nor word, nor by letter as from vs, as though the day of the Lord were at hand.*
3. *Let no man deceiue you by any meanes.--*



THE fourth part of this Epistle followeth, which is a brotherly Admonition: wherein we are to conſider,

1. The Forme,
2. The Matter.

In the Forme, the Apoſtle expreſſeth, with what heart and affection he admoniſheth them: and therein, is a worthy preſident vnto all Chriſtians, what louing hearts and feeling affections, they ought to bring with them in admoniſhing one of another.

And firſt he ſtileth them (as in the ſenſe and
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feeling of that spirit, by which he writ, he esteemed them) *Brethren*; wherein, he declareth not onely a speciall loue and affection to the cause, but also to the persons of them he admonisheth. For the persons of brethren (where there is any nature or grace amongst them) are deere one vnto another, in regard of that naturall bond, whereby they are mutually knit one to another. So that in this very name of *Brother*, which he giueth them, there shineth a great loue and affection, in the Apostle towards the persons of all in this Church.

And from this loue, doth this Admonition flow: And from the like Loue and Affection ought all Christian admonition to flow. Wouldst thou effectually admonish an other? thou canst neuer doe it, vntill thou shew thy selfe a brother vnto him. Thou must let him see, that thine admonition streameth a brotherly affection; and that, that is the very ground and cause thereof: so that if thou didst not esteeme and loue him as a brother, thou wouldst not admonish him. On the contrary side, those admonitions that flow from gall and choler, or from malice and hatred of the person admonished, are no Christian admonitions; neither can we expect any blessing on them; but rather, that the parties admonished should be the worse for them. It is *brotherly Admonition*, that Christ will blesse. Neither is it possible for vs, to admonish them brotherly, whom we do not esteeme and affect as brethren.

2. In this Admonition he louingly entreateth and beseecheth them, to take heede vnto themselves.

selues. As he calleth them *Brethren*; so he beha-
ueth himselfe towards them as a Brother, in the
whole tenor of his Admonition. For in meeke,
sweet, and brotherly manner he prayeth and be-
seecheth them to beware and to take heede; and
doth not in an imperious, and controlling manner
require the same, though he were their superiour:
wherein he sheweth a tender and compassionate
heart, esteeming their danger to erre, as it were his
owne hurt, and their freedome from error as his
owne good. For, when men of their owne meere
motion do become suiters and suppliants vnto
others, though it be for others; yet they declare
therein, that they themselues haue an interest in
that good, which they sue for.

The Apostle carieth not himselfe, as wee of-
ten vse to do in our admonitions and warnings of
others: he biddeth them not, in an insulting man-
ner, looke to themselues, and take heed of such
and such matters, say they haue a faire warning,
thanke themselues, if they do otherwise then they
ought to do, and looke not to be pitied of them:
but he beseecheth and intreateth them; and there-
in professeth, that it should do him much good, if
they would take warning, and that it would be no
small greife and sorrow of heart to him, if they
did not. This spirit, should all Christians bring
vnto the admonishing of their Brethren: especi-
ally the Ministers of Christ. And this is one rea-
son, why there is so litle fruit oft, in our admoniti-
ons, because we shew so litle loue and compassion
in them. Our admonitions for the most part are
but

but purgations and euacuations of our spleane and malice; and not any manifestation of our loue and compassion to the parties admonished, as though their well-doing were an aduantage vnto vs, and their ill-doing a damage vnto vs.

Now further the Apostle doth not nakedly beseech them; but he adjoyneth thereunto, a double adiuuration or obtestation, wherein he declareth, with what zeale and ardor of spirit he beseecheth them. The Apostle then in this his Admonition heateth his Loue with zeale, and moderateth his zeale with Loue: he minglerh & tempereth them both together: In the one, he sheweth his desire of their good; in the other, his feare of their euill.

And therein, he teacheth vs what affections we should bring with vs, to the admonishing of our brethren, a zealous Loue, and a louing Zeale. Loue without zeale is but folly: Zeale without Loue is but furie and madnes. But how do most of vs swarue in our passions, when we come to admonish our brethren? Sometime in our admonitions, we shew neither loue nor zeale; but admonish them in that manner, as though we cared not whether they hearkned to vs or no. Sometime, we shew loue but no zeale; sometime hot zeale, but no loue, if that may be called zeale that is without loue. But let vs neuer take vpon vs this office, vntill we can temper these affections together.

Besides, in this seruencie of his Spirit he sheweth, that they were in great danger to be seduced: and that it was a dangerous matter for them to be seduced and led away with that error which he admonisheth

admoniſheth them of. And in them, he ſheweth the condition of all true Churches and Chriſtians, eſpecially in the time of perſecution and tryall; that they are then in great danger, through the powerfull and malicious worke of Satan, to runne into error: and it is then moſt dangerous for them to erre, as by meanes whereof, they giue ſpeciall aduantage to Satan and to the enemies of the Goſpell.

He adiureth them *by the comming of Chriſt, and by their aſſembling vnto him*: as if he ſhould ſay; you heard before, what I ſaid concerning Chriſts ſecond comming, and the wonderfull glory of all the faithfull, that ſhall be in that day aſſembled vnto him: As therefore, you will looke and expect to be amongſt the number of thoſe, and to haue your portion in that great glory, and as you tender the ſaluation of your ſoules, looke to your ſelues, and take heede of that dangerous error, that here I admoniſh you of.

Whence we obſerue:

1. That Chriſtians muſt learne to place their ſpeciall hope and comfort in the expectation of Chriſts comming: otherwiſe this adiuration ſhould haue litle force in it.

2. That all Chriſtians, Miniſters eſpecially, muſt be moſt carefull, to warne and admoniſh their Chriſtian brethren, of ſuch errors, as may hazard or endanger any wayes, their hope and expectation in that day.

3. That Chriſtians, euen the beſt, and thoſe which haue giuen greateſt teſtimonie and prooſe
of

of their faith, shall bee in danger, if they looke not to themselves, to be seduced and drawne into most pestilent and pernicious errors, such as may take away all hope of, and comfort in the coming of Christ.

4. That the serious meditation and consideration of Christs coming, and the hope of our assembling vnto him, is a speciall meanes to uphold and support all good Christians against such errors. It is a speciall bond to binde vs vnto the truth.

The matter of the Admonition followeth, which is this: That whereas some secret enemies of the Gospell, and of their saluation, went about, vnder diuers pretences to perswade them, that the second coming of Christ should be in their dayes; they would not in any case, be disquieted and troubled in their mindes, or suffer themselves to be deceiued by any such falshood, what colors soeuer they should bring for the same.

Wherein, the Apostle offreth to our consideration,

1. The error it selfe, wherewith seducers went about to corrupt their mindes.

2. The pretences, which they either did, or might vse for the colouring of their error.

3. Their intent in perswading, together with the effect and consequent, that would follow vpon the entertaining thereof.

4. The dutie of Christians in this case.

1. The error is this, that Christ would come to iudgement out of hand euen in their dayes. An euident

eident vntruth, as the experience of many ages ſince hath diſcouered. It ought to be an Article of our Faith, to beleue that Chriſt ſhall certainly come againe to iudge the world. But it is a pernicious error, to determine of this or that particular time, of his comming, any further then we haue cleare euidence out of the word. In matters of Faith we ought not to be wiſe, aboue that which is written.

And obſerue we, how buſie Satan hath bin from the beginning, to fill mens mindes with errors in religion. He that durſt be ſo bold, to corrupt the doctrine of Faith in the Apoſtles time, will be much more bold now: And therefore we had neede to looke, vpon what grounds we build our Faith.

2. The pretences, that either they did or might alledge, are theſe, Priuate Reuelation, Apoſtolicall Tradition, Writings of the Apoſtle, wreſted and miſinterpreted. Theſe were the meanes, whereby euen in the Apoſtles time, the Myſterie of Iniquitie went about to corrupt, infect, and poyſon the Church with errors and heresies. And theſe they are, by which they labour to ſeduce to this day.

3. The intent of theſe ſeducers, in perſwading hereunto, is not manifeſtly expreſſed: And ſurely, it may ſeeme at the firſt, to be a godly error, and that they could meane no hurt, but good, that taught it; and that it could produce nothing, but religious thoughts & deeds, in the receiuers thereof, cauſing them the more carefully to prepare themſelues, that they might the more boldly hold

vp their heads in that day. And surely, those Christians liue a most holy life, that so liue to day, as if they looked that Christ should come vnto iudgement to morrow. And therefore it might seeme, that the Diuell should rather be a looser then a sauer, much lesse a gainer, by this error.

But the Apostles earnestnes doth plainly shew, that the Diuell and those instruments, which he vsed in perswading to this error, had a pestilent intent and purpose therein; and that it came from the mischieuous Spirit of Antichrist, who was now working in a mysterie his owne greatnesse. For though for a time, the perswasion hereof, might stir vp some to looke to their wayes, and bridle their natures from many sinnes; yet when at length they should perceiue that they feared in vaine, and that their religious feares were vpon a wrong ground, it would make them afterward breake forth into so much the more profanenesse, yea and be a meanes to make them at length to beleue, that there shall be no such day at all: and so would it proue a meanes also to open the mouths of profane mockers, as it did indeed in those times 2. *Pet.* 3. 4. and so by that meanes, to weaken the credit and autoritie of the Scriptures, wherein, for this error, there might seeme (they being not rightly vnderstood) some ground.

Let vs therefore, beloued, take heede of any error in Religion, though it haue neuer such a shew. For many times those errors, in the euent proue most pestilent, that carry most shew of piety. Note we withall, how Antichrist in the very egge hath endeououred

endeuoured by all wayes to weaken the authoritie of the Scriptures.

4. The dutie that the Apostle in this case requireth of them is twofold.

First, that they be not distracted in minde, *shaken* as it were *beside their wits, and troubled.*

Wherein the Apostle intimateth,

1. That it is Satans slight and policie oft by false and strange doctrines, to distract and astonish the minds of men, to disturbe and driue them (in a manner) out of their wits: by that meanes not onely to make them vncapable of such holy and sound instruction, as might stay them in the truth, but to make them fit instruments for him further to worke vpon, to possesse them with fond illusions and delusions at his pleasure. That which we may obserue in the doctrine and practise of the Familists, Anabaptists, and other like Enthusiasts of our times; as also in the courses of some of some of those in the Romish Church, who vnder pretence of affecting a seuerer and austerer course of life then ordinarie, haue so weakned their braines, and confounded their imaginations, that they haue afterward fallen into a number of strange fantastick conceits, which partly Satan, taking his opportunitie, hath suggested vnto them, and partly their owne distemper hath of it selfe forged and fraught their heads with.

The second thing he here intimateth, is this, that men are vsually very prone to be distracted and perplexed with such strange and vnsound doctrines, and with such groundles conceits. And

surely, such indeed is our naturall corruption, (some remainders whereof abide in the best,) that the truth of God, evidently taught out of the word, oft affecteth vs but faintly, when such friuolous conceits, though hauing no truth in them, or ground of them, so strongly possesse vs, that with many false feares, they affright and amase vs; and make vs in a manner, beside our selues.

This corruption should we take notice of, and striue and contend to the contrary; that howsoeuer we labour, to keepe our hearts tender and pliable, for Gods Spirit and word to worke vpon, yet we strengthen our mindes against such friuolous and false feares and terrors, as Satan by his instruments, and their strange fancies shall assay to possesse vs with.

The second dutie that the Apostle requireth of them, is to take heede, that *no man by any meanes deceiue them*. Wherein, the Apostle forewarneth them, that by no manner of man or meanes, they suffer themselues to be deluded on this wise. That neither the persons, of those that publish such points, though they seeme to be neuer so holy and religious in their life, or to be neuer so sound in their doctrine and teaching otherwise; nor the meanes they shall pretend, for the ground of such their doctrine, be it reuelation, or tradition, or authoritie of other learned, or counterfeit writings, or the like, preuaile so far with them, as to cause them to giue credit to any erronious doctrine, contrary to that, that the Apostle had before deliuered vnto them, and did now further informe them of.

Whence

Whence we learne, as in hearing to respect and regard, not so much who it is that speaketh, as what it is that is deliuered; so withall, to be carefull to examine whatsoeuer doctrine shall be deliuered of any, vpon any grounds or termes whatsoeuer, with the doctrine of the Prophets & Apostles in the holy Scriptures recorded; and take heede how we admit any, whatsoeuer the bringer of it be, or whatsoeuer plausible pretences shall be alledged for it, that we shall finde vpon due examination, to dissent and swerue, from the written word, or not to haue sure footing and foundation from thence.

— *For that day shall not come, except there come an Apostasie first.* —

The Apostle, hauing in the two former verses admonished the Church, to beware of a dangerous error that some went about to corrupt their mindes withall, concerning the comming of our Sauour Christ, as if it were instant. For the further strengthening of them against the same error, he taketh occasion, by way of prophecie, to foretell of great matters that must come to passe, before that day; which could not, within the compasse of one or of sundry ages following be fulfilled.

The matter of this prophecie is concerning Antichrist, the most pestilent and cruell enemy of the Church of Christ: a matter of great vse and consequence, to all the faithfull people of God.

The

The parts of it are three : For,

1. He foretellet an Apostasie.
2. He foresheweth an Effect thereof.
3. He layeth downe the meanes and the cause thereof.

And this he doth to the end, that all Gods people that haue vnderstanding, may take heede both of the one, and of the other.

For the first, he affirmeth that before that, that day shall come, there must be an *Apostasie*. An Apostasie generally signifieth, a reuolting or falling away from him, whom we are bound & haue vndertaken to serue, and a betaking of our selues to the seruice of his enemy : As when Souldiers in the field, forsake their own Captaine or Emperour, vnto whom they haue sworne allegiance, and perfidiously and traiterously ioyne themselves to the aduerse partie. And such a kinde of Apostasie is it, that the Apostle here meaneth.

Now that we may make the more vse of this point, let vs in order consider :

1. From whom this Apostasie is made.
2. Vnto whom it is made.
3. By whom.
4. By how many.
5. Where.
6. Wherein it consisteth.
7. When it beginneth.
8. When it shall end.

The discussing of these points is needfull, in regard of that wicked opposition, that is made vnto the truth contained in this Scripture, by the enemies

mies of the Grace of God, who are wounded to the quicke by the same, and labour, by all wicked fraud possible to couer it from vs.

For the first, it is plaine that this Apostasie is a reuolting or falling from Iesus Christ. He is the Emperor from whom the departure here mentioned shall be made. This, our Aduersaries themselves dare not denie: yet faine they would shift it of; and therefore their great Champion saith, *that it may be vnderstood to be a departing from the Romane Empire.* For the confirmation whereof, he bringeth the names of three Latine Fathers. But it cannot be so vnderstood.

*Bellarmin. de Pont.
Rom. l. 3. c. 2.*

*Ambrose, Sedu-
lius, Primasius.*

For 1. this sense contradicteth that, which *Belarmine* himselfe maketh the best sense of these words. For if by *Apostasie* in this place, be ment (as he saith) Antichrist himselfe, who should be such a notable Apostata, that he may well be called *Apostasie* it selfe, then it cannot by any meanes be ment of an Apostasie from the Romane Empire. Since it is out of all question, that the Apostasie of the great Antichrist must needs be from Christ.

2. That must needs be an Apostasie from Christ, wherein Antichrist worketh, and by which he groweth to his height.

3. This Apostasie is afterwards in the 7. verse called *the Myserie of Iniquitie*: which must needs be opposite to *the Myserie of Godlinesse*, of the Gospell: and so, by consequent it must needs be a departure from Christ. Neither can it bee shewed, that the Scripture any where taketh this word

word in any other sense, where it useth it indefinitely.

4. The use that the Apostle maketh of this in the 15. verse, manifesteth the same. *Therefore, saith he, brethren, stand fast, and keepe the instructions you haue bin taught.* What? Doth he herein moue them to stand fast to the Romane Emperor and Empire? No: but Iesus Christ, of whom he had spoken before. This standing fast, is opposite to falling away: which therefore the Apostle expresseth else-where, by a word that signifieth *to fall*. Looke therefore, what the Apostle willet them to stand fast to, was this departure to be made from.

This point then is cleare, that Christ is the person from whom this Apostasie shall be made.

And yet suppose it were from the Emperor, what good getteth the Iesuite, or his Master, or his Church by that? Surely none at all. For they are all of them Apostataes from the Empire of Rome: they haue thrust the Emperor from Rome; they haue taken his authoritie from him; and the loialtie and homage that they owe to him, do they giue to a proud vsurping Prelate; who out of this Apostasie is risen vp, and so by the same consequent is reuealed to be Antichrist.

2. The Person, vnto whom in this Apostasie they flie, must needs be some speciall aduersarie of Christ. And that must needs be Antichrist, who is the head & ring-leader in this Apostasie, though masked and couered for a time. For he is the party, that in this Apostasie shall be discouered: and he

is

Hebr. 6. 6.
παρρησια.

is afterward deſcribed to be *the Aduerſarie*; to whom, but to Chriſt and all true Chriſtians? Now reuolters euer flie to the aduerſe partie. I know none that denieth this, or maketh any queſtion of it. And this confirmeth the former point. For to fall to Antichriſt, is to fall from Chriſt.

3. This Apoſtaſie is to be made by Chriſtians: that is, ſuch as haue giuen their names to Chriſt, and haue bin baptiſed into his Name. This is plaine. For none can reuolt or fall from Chriſt, but he that is the profeſſed ſeruant and follower of Chriſt.

4. This Apoſtaſie is to be a generall or vniuerſall departure of the whole Chriſtian world, tho not of euery particular Chriſtian in the world.

This is manifeſt;

1. By the indefinite ſpeech of the Apoſtle. For if he had ment otherwiſe, then of a generall defection, he would ſome way or other haue limited his ſpeech.

2. Our Sauour ſpeaking of the latter times, ſaith, *When the Sonne of Man commeth, ſhall he finde Faith vpon earth?*

3. Many of our Aduerſaries, if not all, do grant it, that vnder Antichriſt there ſhall be a generall reuolt: but from whom? from the Pope & Romane Church. So that Antichriſt ſhould rather in that regard be called Antipope then Antichriſt. Yet let vs take it at their hands.

4. The euent hath ſhewed it. Diuers of the Fathers haue complained of it. One ſaith of the whole Church in his time, that it had the Caskets & Cabinets wherein the Jewels & Treasures of the Church were, but had loſt the Jewels

O

and

Luk. 18. 8.

*Rhem. on 1.
Theſſ. 2. Domin.
à Soto in Sent. l.
4. diſt. 46. q. 1.
art. 1.
Catharin. in 2.
Theſſ. 2.*

*Chryſoſt. in
1. Cor. 14. hom.
36.*

Bern. ad Clerum
in Concil. Rhe-
mens.

Cornelius Eiton-
tinnus.

and Treasures of the Church were, but had lost the Jewels and Treasures themselves: and compareth her to a woman fallen from her prosperitie, that had nothing to shew, but some bare tokens and signes onely: that it was no more *Bethel* but *Beth-aven*; that it was no better then a *Tauerne* or *tipling-house*. Another afterward complaining of his times, *Oh, saith he, these are the unhappy times, wherein men will not endure wholesome doctrine.* And againe he saith, that there were made in the Church inward and incurable wounds. Papists themselves haue complained of it; not of this or that particular Church, but of the whole Church in generall. Saith one, in a speech made in the Councell of Trent, *I would, they had not with one consent fallen from religion to superstition, from faith to infidelitie, from Christ to Antichrist, from God to the belly-God.* A Pope himself could say of his times, *We are all of vs of that beleefe that our Princes are: if they would worship Idols, we would worship them also; because Charitie is cold, and all faith is perished.*

5 The place of this Apostasie is euident. It is the Christian world, the Church Militant.

This appeareth;

1. By all the former points. For none, but those, which are members of the Church of Christ, can properly be said to make an Apostasie from Christ. Since those were neuer with Christ, that were not of his Church.

2. Antichrist, the cheife author, vnder the Diuell, of this Apostasie, is said to sit in the Temple of God;

God; that is, as we shall shew afterward, in the Church of Christ. That is his shop where hee worketh: as for Infidels, Iewes, and Turks, he is not so busie amongst them.

3. *Paul telleth the Elders of Ephesus, that after his departure, there should enter in, rauening wolues amongst them, not sparing the flocke; and therefore exhorteth them to watch and take heede to that particular Church, whereof the Lord had made them ouer-seers: adding withall, that euen of their owne selues also men should arise, speaking peruerse things, to draw disciples after them.*

Ad. 20. 28, 29, 30

The other three points, to wit, wherein this Apostasie consisteth, when it beginneth, and how long it shall last, will appear in the explication of the verses following.

— *and that Man of sin be discovered, euen the Sonne of perdition.*

Verf. 4. *Which is an aduersarie, and exalteth himselfe against all that is called God: so that he sitteth as God in the Temple of God, shewing himselfe as God.*

Hitherto of the Apostasie: the Effect thereof followeth; which is the reuelation and discoverie of a strange Monster, that shall arise out of the same, and grow greater and greater by the increase thereof.

What manner of person he shall be, he sheweth by the description of him; wherein he giueth to vnderstand, how necessarie it will be for the

Church of God to be able to know and discern him.

The first Argument, whereby he describeth him, is his Lewdnes, that he is a *Man of sinne*. Whereby we are to vnderstand, not onely that Antichrist shall be a sinfull man, or some great and notorious sinner onely; but by *man of sinne*, we are to vnderstand one, that hath the arte and mysterie of sinning, whereby he doth not onely in his owne person sinne, but maketh it a trade and an occupation to draw others vnto sinne. He is such a sinner, as the Pharisees were, that would compasse sea and land to make a Profelyte, and make him two-fold more the childe of the Deuill then themselues. And therefore also is the profession and practise of antichrist called afterward, *a mysterie of iniquitie*. So that all his wit, strength, and authoritie shall be herein imployed, to abandon and ouerthrow righteousness, and to aduance sinne and rebellion, superstition and idolatry, against God and his Sonne Christ.

Math. 23. 15.

Therefore also (in some measure) all his subiects are a companie of such as haue learned this Art. And it will be good for all that looke to be saued by Iesus Christ, to know this Man, & to take heed of him, & to haue as litle dealing with him as may be. For all his dealing with men, is to draw them to sin against God; yea to be artificiall sinners; to make it a trade to draw others to sin; and be such sinners, as the more they shall sin, the lesse they shall seeme to sinne, or shall deeme themselves so to do. There is none therefore that feareth God,
that

that should desire to haue any league or communion with him, or with any of his professed seruants and followers. For as he is a *Man of sinne*, so they shall get no good by him, vnlesse they serue him in sinne. And if we be to seuer our selues from all *inordinate* persons; how much more then from this *Man of sinne*, and all his adherents?

2. Thess. 3. 6.

The second Argument, whereby the Apostle describeth him, is his Crueltie: and so the second title he giueth him, is *the Sonne of perdition*: which is the same Title that is giuen *Iudas* the Traitor by our Sauour. Wherein appeareth, that Antichrist shall in nature and qualitie, be an other *Iudas*, and as it were *Iudas* his successor. And indeed there cannot (as we shall heare afterward) be a greater resemblance betweene two, then betweene them.

Ioh. 17. 12.

In this Title, there is an *Hebraisme*; whereby is ment 1. Passiuely, one destinated and ordained to destruction; as, *filius gehennæ*, Math. 23. 15. *the sonne of Hell*; one that shall haue his portion in hell fire: *filiij iræ*, children of wrath, Ephes. 2. 3. and *Sonnes of the promise*, such as shall partake in Gods promises. Rom. 9. 8.

2. Actiuely, one ordained to be a destroyer of others: as *the sonne of wisdom*, for a wise man. Math. 11. 19. so *the sonne of perdition*, for a destroyer. To which purpose also is Antichrist called *Abaddon & Apollyon*. i. a destroyer. So that as *Iudas*, before he came to his end, was the death of Christ, so shall Antichrist be the ruine and destruction of the mysticall bodie of Christ, for which he died. And as Christ is a Sayiour, and that a mighty one: so shall he be

Apo. 9. 11.

be a destroyer, & that a mighty & powerfull one. So that whosoever followeth him, shall be sure to come to eternall ruine & confusion with him.

This should be a motiue, to perswade vs to take heede of him. We had better fall into the hands of any theeues and robbers, then of Antichrist. He is destinated, not onely to damne his owne soule, but all those also that submit vnto him, if the Lord do not in good time deliuer them: and those he most destroyeth, that he most maketh of.

The third Argument, whereby he describes him, is his Pride. He is said to be *one that opposeth himselfe, and listeth himselfe aboue all that is called God, or that is worshipped*. Such shall be the intolerable arrogancie of this Man of sinne, that he will not endure, that any power or potentate, in heauen or earth, should be aboue him. So that he is an irreconcilable Aduersarie, to all those, that prefer the worship of God before his worship, and that will not adore his ordinances, before & aboue Gods, or any left vnto man by God. For he cannot, by any other meanes, lift vp himselfe aboue God, and be an Aduersarie vnto him, but by lifting vp of his owne lawes aboue Gods, and trampling Gods vnder his feete, that his owne may be obserued; not induring any law, that shall crosse the law of his owne wicked will. So that he shall not thinke it enough, to be reputed higher, then all the Princes and Potentates vpon earth, except he may be worshipped also, euen aboue God himselfe.

Now, to the end, that he may the more oppose him-

himselfe against God; the Apostle addeth,

1. That the principall place of his residencie, where he will erect his Throne and Consistorie, shall be *in the Temple of God*; that is, in the Church of Christ, where God dwelleth most, and ruleth and gouerneth most, there will Antichrist be most busie. For that is ment by *the Temple of God*, as appeares 1. Cor. 1. 2. with 3. 16. where speaking to all wheresoeuer, that call vpon the name of God; *Know yee not*, saith he, *that yee are the Temple of God, & that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* See also 1. Pet. 2. 5. So that the place of Antichrists tyrannous dominion, shall be the Christian world, amongst the people of God, where the Name of God is called vpon, in the Catholicke and vniuersall Church vpon Earth.

So that we must not looke for this man of Sinne, in Turkie, Barbarie, &c, but amongst such as haue receiued the Gospell of Christ.

2. He addeth, That he shall *carry himselfe in the Temple of God*, not as a Seruant, Subiect, or Minister of God, but *as God*: that is, looke what God vseth to do, that will he do. He will be head of the whole Church, the supreme and vncontroulable Gouernor: he will prescribe Lawes and Canons to the whole Christian world; prescribe a word of his owne, Sacraments of his owne, a Church ministerie of his owne: he will take vpon him to binde mens Consciences to his will, as to the will of the eternall God; to blesse whom he liketh, and to curse whom he listeth. &c.

What an arrogant person is this? How haue
the

the people of God neede to take heed of such a monster? What blocks and sorts are they, that cannot discouer him, and know him? Let vs therefore, beloued, that liue in Gods Church, take heed to our selues; looke to our religion and worship, and all the parts thereof; that we do not serue Antichrist rather than Christ, and that we mingle not both together. It will be hard, to liue in Gods Church in his times, and to keepe wholly free from him, who if he cannot wholly draw men from Christ, will be attempting yet to do it in part.

Verf. 5. Remember ye not, that while I was yet with you, I told you of these things?

FOr the further confirming of them in this truth, before he proceed any further in the description of that Man of sinne, which shall be reuealed, not without a secret reproofe of their forgetfulnes, he calleth to their minde some other points, which, together with these, he had taught them by word of mouth concerning Antichrist.

Whence breifely we may obserue;

1. How profitable the remembrance of any diuine truth may be, especially at some times, if men could then remember it. If this people had but remembred thus much, as they ought to haue done, they had not bin in danger of being poysoned, with the error before mentioned, but they had a present preseruatiue and counter-poyson against it.

2. Note we, how forgetfull the best children of God

God may be of those diuine doctrines, which most concerne them, and which one would think, they could not haue forgotten if they would.

3. Marke what aduantage Satan makes of our forgetfulnes. Did he see that care in vs, to remember the word that ought to be, he would not be so bold to broach & spread his errors as he is: So that though there be much teaching, yet there is so litle remembrance of that, that is taught, that Satan and his instruments may broach any errors, and yet we neuer able through our meere forgetfulnes, to oppose the diuine truth of God against them.

4. All Christians, especially Ministers, may learne hence, to be carefull to call to the memories of their hearers, what they haue formerly taught, especially when particular occasion serues to make vse thereof, as when the forgetfulnes thereof, may proue prejudiciall and dangerous vnto them.

Verf. 6. *And now yee know, what with-holdeth; that he might be reuealed in his due time.*

7. *For the mysterie of iniquitie doth already worke: onely he that with-holdeth shall let, till he be taken out of the way.*

8. *And then shall that wicked one be reuealed; whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall abolish with the brightnes of his comming.*

TO come to the particular points then, that ouer & besides he putteth them in minde of.

The first is this, that he had acquainted them with a speciall let and impediment that hindred the present reuealing of this Man of sinne.

What this should be, the Apostle here concealeth: So that it seemes, he told it them then as a secret, fit for the Christians in those times to know, but not so fit to be published. Onely it seemeth by that which followeth, that it was some kinde of person that hindred. And the most generall receiued opinion is, that it was the Emperour of Rome. This haue the ancientest Fathers held: and this do most, both Protestants and Papists too grant. And the euent doth agree thereunto. Yea, it seemes that by their tyrannie and persecution they hindred the same. For so long as the Church was vnder persecution, and the sword of the Magistrate was drawne against it, this proud Man of Sinne lurking in the Church, and beginning to aduance himselfe, yet could not rise to his greatnes. And this may be the reason, why the Spirit of God concealeth the impediment, lest this might the more encourage the Ciuill Magistrates, and Potentates to persecute the Church. And indeed the very suspicion of this, that Christians would be the ouerthrow of that Empire, was one cause of many bloody persecutions.

2. He admonisheth them, that the foresaid Apostasie was euen then in working, which here he describes to be a *mysterie of iniquitie*, that is, an Art of sinning, by secret, cunning and artificiall conueyances: whereby he meaneth that then the foundations and grounds, and principles of the
Anti-

Antichriſtian religion were ſecretly laying: So that the Apoſtaſie of Antichriſt or the Antichriſtian Religion was not to riſe on a ſodaine, but as an edifice is long before in ſquaring and working, and at length is reared and ioyned: ſo the Religion of Antichriſt, (which is therefore an auncient religion, at leaſt the maine grounds whereupon it is built) ſhould be a long time preparing and priuily contriuing, before it ſhould come to be openly and eminently, erected in his due proportion and full perfection.

3. He telleth them, that *that which hindreth* the manifeſtation of the Man of Sinne, *ſhall hinder, untill it be remoued*; and that as ſoone as it is remoued, *ſhall that wicked one be diſcouerd*: Which ſheweth that Antichriſt reuealed, and this let and impediment could not ſtand together, but the one muſt be remoued, before the other can ſhew himſelfe in his colors.

Here then, the Apoſtle giueth them a watch-word, concerning the time, when the Church of God was to expect the manifeſtation of Antichriſt: to wit, when this let was remoued, and not before then. So that the Man of Sinne ſhall be diſcouered, and then muſt be diſcouered, when he is at his greateſt height.

Note by the way, the Title giuen this Man of Sinne here; he is called *ὁ ἀνόμιμος*, *the lawleſſe* perſon. So that Antichriſt is ſuch a one as will be lawleſſe, ſubiect and lyable to no law, but will ouer-top and ouer-rule all lawes at his pleaſure.

4. He putteth them in minde of the end of Antichrist, after he is reuealed, and that is twofold:

1. He shall be *consumed by the breath of the Lords mouth*. As Antichrist shall in a speciall manner set himselfe against Christ: so will Christ set himselfe in a speciall manner against him, and then most, when he is greatest. Neither will Christ at once vtterly confound him; but first he will by litle and litle consume him: So that as at the first he grew by litle and litle to his greatnes, so he shall by litle and litle be consumed.

The meanes whereby he will consume Antichrist, is, *by the Spirit of his mouth*, that is, by the word of God, and the preaching of the Gospel. See *Psal. 33. 6.* and *Eesai. 11. 4.* It is not sword and speare, that shall so much preuaile against Antichrist, as the Ministerie of the word. Antichrists glory shall more and more vanish, the more that it preuaileth.

This point may giue vs great light in the disco-
uerie of Antichrist and his kingdome, and of the
open and secret frends thereof.

2. He and his kingdome shall be vtterly abolished at the second comming of Christ, and not before. So that though he be the vilest and most detestable monster that euer was; yet he shall not either by the word or sword, be vtterly destroide vntill the latter day. So that till the day of doome he shall sit in the Temple of God, seducing the Saints of God, and drawing men from the Gospel of Christ to his idolatry, euen vntill the end of the world: and then shall he and all his limmes, by
whose

whose meanes his kingdome hath here bin aduanced, be caſt into that burning Lake. *Apoc. 20. 10.*

So that Antichriſt now is, and hath his kingdome vpon the Earth, and ſhall haue, though eue-ry day more and more ruined, vntill the day of doome.

Theſe are the points, which he calleth to their memories, which formerly he had taught them, and is faine to teach them ouer againe, and to apply them, as a ſpeciall counter-poyſon againſt that falſe error, that before was mentioned, concerning the neerenes of Chriſts ſecond comming.

Verf. 9. Whoſe comming is by the working of Satan, with all power, & ſignes, & lying wonders.

10. And in all deceiueablenes of vnrightheouſnes, among them that periſh.

THe Apoſtle here returneth againe to the deſcription of Antichriſt, from which he had digreſſed; ſhewing the meanes, whereby this Man of finne ſhould raiſe himſelf to his height, and hauing ſo done ſhould vphold, from time to time this his apoſtaticall kingdome.

The meanes are Generall or Speciall.

The generally, that he will *come with the efficacie of Satan*: that is, Satan, eſpecially when he is mounted vp into his chaire of eſtate, will worke mightily and powerfully in and by him: ſo that he ſhall haue all the helpe and furtherance, that Satan can afford him, for the aduancement of his kingdome, euen as if he and all his Champions were

were inspired with the diuell, and had *Beelzebub* as a familiar with them, to aduize and execute what they would. No Iuglers or Coniurers, no Witches and Wisards, nor the Soothsayers of *Egypt*, shall come with that efficacie of Satan that he shall, and therefore it must needs be wonderfull powerfull. As the Spirit of God is effectuell in the ministers of Christ. *Col. 1. 29. 1 Cor. 14. 25.* So shall the spirit of Satan be as effectuell, to these ends and purposes in the ministers, and instruments of Antichrist.

More particularly he sheweth 1. wherein this efficacie of Satan shall consist, and

2. Vpon whome it shall take hold.

For the former: The efficacie of Satan in him shall shew it selfe, in procuring him all the power and authoritie that may be, and in confirming the same, with lying wonders and miracles, and by all the wicked and impious fraudes and collusions that may be deuised.

Which sheweth, that Antichrist shall be such a one as shall not deceaue of ignorance, but of set purpose; and shall propound to himselfe by all deuices that may be, to drawe men from the truth, against knowledge and conscience. It shall be his glory and joy to seduce men, and to withdrawe them from the true faith of Christ, to the end that he may thereby, the more establish his owne kingdom, and greatnes vpon earth.

2. The persons whome Satan by Antichrist shall seduce, are such as shall perish, as are reprobates. *Iud. 4. Apoc. 13. 8. & 9. 4.* These are the true

true members of Antichrists kingdome, in whom he shall worke most effectually. So that the more wicked a man is, and the more hated of God, the more subiect shall he be to be deceiued by Antichrist: and the more that we see men deluded and deceiued by him, the more are we to feare their eternall perdition.

Obiect: What? Shall Antichrist then deceiue none but those that shall perish?

Sol: Yes: euen Gods owne people shall be in *Babylon*, which is Antichrists kingdome. *Come out of her, my people. Apoc. 18.4.* But they shall bee *most effectually* deluded that shall perish. They shall of all other, by the iust iudgement of God, be most abused by him. So that the vitall members of Antichrist, and the peculiar limmes of his Kingdome, shall be a damned crue of reprobates, persons ordained to perdition.

— *because they receiued the loue of the truth, that they might be saued.*

Here is the reason, why those that shall perish shall thus be deceiued: because they shewed no loue, nor liking, nor would giue any intertainment to the truth; but despised the meanes of their owne saluation.

Truth here, is the Gospell, so called

1. In regard of the certaintie and infallibilitie of it: in comparison whereof, all other doctrines & religions are error, and all other humane truths, vanitie

vanitie and deceite. The Gospell will neuer deceiue vs: whatsoeuer it promiseth, shall certainly come to passe; whatsoeuer it affirmeth, shall neuer be proued false.

2. In regard of the vse of it: it is the rule of all sauing truth. Whatsoeuer is not ruled and squared thereby, in matter of Saluation and Religion is error.

3. In regard of the effect and efficacie of it: for,
1. It is powerfull to discouer and beate downe all error and heresie, and vntruth whatsoeuer.

2. It is a great and powerfull instrument of God, to worke truth and synceritie in the heart. And where this truth is not, there is nothing but hypocrisie and fallhood.

This Gospell then, is *Truth* it selfe, and yet is nothing ordinarily, accounted more false: witnesse the very liues of Christians and such as professe it.

To *entertaine the loue of this Truth*, is to entertaine it with loue: as

1. To hunger and thirst after it;
2. To seek and search after the knowledge of it,
3. To giue credit unto it;
4. To loue and affect all the meanes, whereby it is attained;
5. To bestowe cost vpon it;
6. To reioyce in it, and all those that loue it;
7. To cleaue and sticke close to it;
8. To defend and maintaine it;
9. To growe and increase in it;
10. To expect and looke for all happines, and salua-

saluation in and through it.

When men therefore,

1. Desire it not.
2. Neuer seeke after it.
3. Giue no credit to it.
4. Care not for the meanes.
5. Think all cost too much they are at with it.
6. Take no pleasure in it.
7. Flie from it and forsake it.
8. Oppose themselues against it.
9. Stand at a stay in it.
10. Look not for saluation by it; they are said
not to entertaine it.

Where note by the way,

1. That it is not enough to receiue the truth, and giue some kinde of entertainment to it, but we must giue it louing entertainment, if we looke to haue good of it, if we desire to be eternally saued by it.

2. That not to entertaine the loue of the Gospell, and not to accept of the conditions of saluation therein offred, is a fearefull signe of one that shall perish.

More principally we are here to note,

1. What is the cause, why the Lord will suffer Antichrist so far to preuaile ouer the Christian world; to wit, for their vnkinde vsage and contempt of the Gospell. All despisers therefore of the Gospell, that entertaine not the loue of it, are in danger to be deceiued by Antichrist, and lye open to his sleights and subtleties.

Q

2. That

2. That the best counterpoyson against Antichrists seducements, is, to entertaine the truth, as was aforesaid. The loue vnto the truth, shall be more able to preserue vs, and arme vs against all the efficacie of his power, though he haue the helpe of all the Diuels in Hell, then if a man had the greatest learning and knowledge that euer any man had.

Verf. 11. *And therefore shall God send them strong delusion, that they should beleene lies,*

12. *That they might all be damned, that beleened not the truth, but delighted in vnrighteousnes.*

IN these words, is declared the ground and equitie of the former iudgement: wherein consider we two points:

1. The iudgement of God vpon such as entertaine not the loue of the truth. 2. The cause thereof.

The iudgement is this; *God shall send them strong delusions*, or *the efficacie of coosenage*, as it may be translated: that is, God will giue them ouer to Satan and Antichrist, and will giue them libertie to deceiue and cozen their soules: so that there were neuer any so cozened, and deluded, and abused as they shall be.

He further amplifieth this iudgement, by the effect and the end of it.

The effect; *they shall beleene lies*: they shall in that manner be cozened, that they shall receiue and

and entertaine, as the eternall truth of God, moſt groſſe and notorious lies and figments, abſurd and moſt palpable vntruths and fables; and ſo belecue them, as no euidence or demonſtration of truth, ſhall be able to draw them from the ſame.

The end, why the Lord doth this; *that they might be damned*, being by that meanes, drawne with the Deuill and Antichriſt into euerlaſting perdition.

The cauſe of this fearefull Iudgement is two-fold:

1. *Because they beleued not the truth.* i. would giue no credit to the word of God and the promiſes thereof, but eſteemed them as ſo many toyes and fables, worthy no beleefe or credit.

2. *Because they tooke pleaſure in vnrighteouſnes:* i. tooke ſuch delight and felicitie in thoſe ſinnes, which by nature they were giuen vnto, that rather then they would forſake and forgo them, they choſe rather to trample all the hope that the Goſpell gaue them, vnder their feet: So affected and well-pleaſed were they with their naturall corruptions, that nothing could bring them out of conceit with them.

Whence we may learne;

1. That Antichriſt ſhall deceiue and delude none, further then God giueth ſpeciall commiſſion. God hath a ſpeciall guidance, and gouernment, and direction in the ſeducements of Antichriſt. God deludes not, but yet ſends deluſions: and if hee ſend them not, they cannot come. Hee leaueth the ſeducer, and the ſeduced togi-

ther, ordering both of them to the glory of his iustice.

2. That the Kingdome of Antichrist consisteth of a companie, of cozened and deluded people. Therefore the more that men hate to be deceiued and coozened; the more let them take heede of that sinne that layeth them open therevnto.

3. It is a fearefull signe that God intendeth to damne those, whom he suffereth to be so powerfully deluded by Antichrist. For whom he meaneth to damne, he is wont to giue vp to a reprobate sense; that, which they are like soone to come to, that are so powerfully deluded.

And thus of the prophecie of Antichrist, and of the Apostasie, that by his meanes was to be effected before the latter day: the branches whereof, together with some particular vses, we haue laid open before. Now followeth the maine Vse; which is this, to take heede of this Apostasie, and of that Man of Sinne, which in the same shall be reuealed.

Now this that we may the better doe, we must learne, so far as this Prophecie will helpe vs to finde out,

1. Where this Apostasie is;
2. Where we may finde this Man of Sinne.

First, for the finding out of this Apostasie, we must consider, what properties and notes to discover the same, are laid downe in this prophecie; and then see whether they agree to any state or condition of people, that either hath bin or yet is in the world. For there neede be no question but, vnto
what

what state or condition of people so euer these rules shall agree, that there this Apostasie is.

1. This Apostasie must be a reuolt of Christians from Christ, that is, a departing from the foundation of that Faith, Religion, and diuine worship, which was planted by the Apostles in the primitive Church: this is out of question; and appeareth, as before was shewed, by the title giuen it, *vers. 7. the Myserie of iniquitie*, opposed to *the Myserie of the Gospell*; and the vse made of it, *vers. 15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, &c.*

2. This Apostasie is Catholick and Universall, ouer-spreading the whole face of the Christian world. This is euident by the indefinite speech of the Apostle, *vers. 1.* by the Confession of all men, euen our Aduersaries themselves, & by the euent.

3. This Apostasie is a Myserie of Iniquitie, wherein men do not professedly fall from Christ; but vnder the profession of Christ, and in his name, do fight against him in an hidden and artificiall manner. *vers. 7.*

4. This Apostasie shall be one bodie, and haue a Catholicke head, who shall in that manner rule ouer the members thereof, as Christ doth ouer his Church. *vers. 4.*

5. This Apostasie was not to be such, on the sodaine, but to begin by litle and litle, and so (by degrees) to increase, and afterward againe to decrease by degrees. *vers. 7, 8.*

6. This Apostasie began in the Apostles time: for then it is said, that the Myserie of iniquitie began to worke. *vers. 7.*

7. It shall preuaile against thole, that loue not the truth and sinceritie of the Gospell, but giue libertie and indulgence vnto themselues, to liue in some sinne. *vers. 10.*

8. It shall be effected and vpheld with the efficacie of Satan, with all power, and signes, & lying wonders. *vers. 9.*

9. It shall be consumed by the Spirit of Gods mouth. i. by the word of God. *vers. 8.*

All these points are cleare enough out of this prophecie; and if they were not, yet might we well conclude, that where all these may be verified of any Apostasie now in being, that it is either the same with it, or as bad as it. But there is no cause to doubt of any of them: and therefore we are to make no question, but that, these points being true, this Apostasie must needs now be in the world, and that it must needs greatly concerne all Christians, to be warned thereof: As also, that for the finding thereof, we are not to seeke the secret nookes and corners, woods and wildernesses, for it is to spread ouer the whole Christian world.

That this Apostasie then, such as the Apostle here prophecied of, is to be found in the present Church of Rome, is most euident and notorious.

For 1. that this Romish Church hath made an Apostasie from the Faith and Religion planted by the Apostles, and that for this 1000. yeares, so that she is no more like to that Church, that the Apostles planted at Rome, then Hell is to Heau'n, may appeare by these Reasons:

1. From

1. From the difference of the Church.
2. From the difference of the Church government.
3. From the difference of the Doctrine.
4. From the difference of the worship.

1. The present Church of Rome holdeth her ſelfe to be a Catholicke Church, vniuerſally ſpread ouer the face of the whole world, vnto which all true Chriſtians, and Churches doe appertaine as members: ſo that they are held no true Churches or members of Chriſt, or Chriſtians, that are not professed members of the Church of Rome, in what parts ſo euer of the world they abide.

But the Church of Rome, which the Apoſtles planted, was a particular Church onely, comprehending vnder it onely thoſe Chriſtians, which dwelt in and about Rome, and not in any other places. For *Paul* directing his Epistle to that Church, deſcribes it thus, *The Saints at Rome*; and concludes his Epistle, with Salutations vnto ſuch perſons, as inhabited in or about Rome, yea and it was ſent from Corinth vnto this Church: which could not be, if this Church were euery where, and had not bin a particular Church.

Againe, this Apoſtle writing to other Churches, giues them as great, glorious, and reſpectfull titles and priuiledges, as he doth vnto this Church. Neither doth he any where, in any colorable manner, ſubiekt them to this; but writes vnto them as entire, and diſtinct, and free Churches of themſelues; neuer exhorting or mouing vnto ſubiection or obedience to this Church. And if it had bin ſuch a Church

Church, of which all Christians are members, he would (out of question) haue described it, writing vnto it, as *Iames* and *Peter* do, writing to the dispersed *Iewes*; *To the 12. Tribes scattred abroad*; *To the strangers that dwell through Pontus, Asia, &c.* So, *To the Church of Rome, and all the members thereof, euen to all the Christians throughout the world.* So that this Church of Rome, can no more be said, to be such a kinde of Church, as the Apostles planted, then the whole world can be said to be the Citie of Couentrie, or Lichfield, or London. And for any colour of ought in Gods word, these or any of them, yea this Parish of Stapen-hill, might make as good claime to be the Catholicke Church, as the Church of Rome may.

2. The head-Officers and Gouvernors of the old Church of Rome, were the same, for name & office, that were appointed in other Churches. For had they bin Officers of an other kinde, the Apostles would vndoubtedly haue giuen notice of it.

But the Head-Officers of this Church, are such, as whose names and peculiar Offices were neuer heard of in the Apostolicall Churches or times. The Apostles, in their Epistles, do often mention the Church-Gouvernors in their times: and yet not a sillable concerning any Pope, Cardinals, Abbots, Moncks, Friers, Iesuities &c. nor any such kinde of Officers. Take these Offices and Officers out of the present Romish Church, and you raze the very foundation of their Church: and yet that Church

Church of Rome, which the Apostle wrote vnto, was perfect and compleat without them.

3. The maine and fundamentall doctrine of this Church, whereby it differs from those reformed Churches, that haue made separation from it, cannot be iustified by the doctrine of the olde Church of Rome, and of other Churches in those times, comprehended in the Canonick Epistles of the Apostles: as, Iustification by works, Transubstantiation, Mans Free-will, Abilitie to keep the whole Law, Merit of works, Satisfaction for Sin &c. It shall not be needfull vpon this occasion, to enter into prooffe of particulars. This in generall, may serue for a prooffe of all; Her enmitie to the Scriptures, diminishing the authoritie of them, as much as she may, preferring hir owne authoritie aboue them; her tying the Scriptures, to what translation she pleaseth, to what sense she listeth; and her keeping them locked from the people, shewes that her fundamentall doctrines are not agreable to the Scriptures, and by consequent differing from the Doctrine of the old Church of Rome.

4. Her principall Worship and Seruice, so far forth as it differeth from our Churches, is as different as may be from that worship & seruice, which is prescribed by the Apostles to the olde Church of Rome, and other Churches. Her Masses, her Dirges, her Trentalls, her Prayers for the dead, her Pilgrimages, Processions, Adoration of Images, Angels, and Saints departed, her Vowes of Virginitie and Pouertie, her Seruice in

a strange tongue &c. In these doth her principall worship of God consist. And yet not one of these hath any colour or shadow from the doctrine and worship prescribed in the Epistle to the Romans, or in any other Booke of Scriptures.

2. That this Apostasie of the Church of Rome, is a Catholicke Apostasie, needs no prooffe; seeing themselves glory and boast of the Catholicknes of their Religion, especially before *Luther*, and how generally and vniuersally their Worship and Faith aforesaid, haue bin receiued and professed; neither hath there bin, since the Apostles, any profession so generall and vniuersall, as the Papacie, when it was at his height. In this they glory; But except they could iustifie the truth of their Faith and Religion, this their glory is their shame. -For by this meanes they rather argue, that they are not of the true Religion, but of this Apostasie, because there was to be an vniuersall departure from the true Faith, in which case not the true Church, but the Apostaticall must be vniuersall.

3. The Church of Rome hath a Catholicke Head, who in that manner rules ouer the members thereof, as Christ doth ouer his Church. For the Pope claimes to be the Uniuersall Head of the Church, making Lawes according to his owne pleasure, euen to binde the Consciences of all them that are vnder him, of no lesse authoritie then the Lawes of God.

4. The Religion of Popery came not in, all at one time, but by degrees, beginning in the Apostles times, and increasing more and more after the

the deceaſe of the Apoſtles, as the ſinceritie of the true Religion decreaſed. It is evidently to be ſeene in Hiſtorie, when and by what meanes the groſſe and maine points of the Popiſh Religion came in.

5. It preuaileth, againſt whom moſt? Surely, ſuch as evidently ſhew, that they beare no loue to the word, but are deſpiſers of it, and the miniſterie thereof. Such in our experience are they, that uſe to be ſeduced; men that are glad to haue any colour to be of any Religion, ſaue that which is the true, and which croſſeth their corruptions.

6. The whole world knoweth with what efficacie and power of Satan it hath bin vpheld: how buſie Satan was, how oft he appeared in Goblins, Fayries, walking Spirits &c. for the ſtrengthening and ſupporting of it.

7. It cannot endure the brightnes of Gods word, but melteth before it as Snow before the Sunne.

Hitherto we haue ſhewed, that the Religion of the Church of Rome is that Antichriſtian Apoſtaſie, that here is prophecied of; becauſe all the notes and marks thereof, doe moſt liuely agree thereunto, more then to any Religion and Profeſſion in the world beſides.

In the next place we are to ſhew that the Biſhop of Rome is the Head of that Apoſtaſie, and that great Antichriſt here prophecied of. Which appeareth, partly by that which hath bin ſaid before concerning the Apoſtaſie of that Church; & ſhall more fully appeare by thoſe Notes, whereby in

this Prophecie he is described.

The first is this. The Antichrist is a Man of Sinne. i. not onely a notorious sinner in his owne person, but as Satan is; a notable instrument of Satan, to draw men from the obedience of Christ, to sinne and rebellion against God.

This agrees to all the Bishops of that Sea, in a manner, since they became **Uniuerfall** Bishops. It is almost incredible, what monstrous villaines most of them haue bin; and that by the report of their owne Historians. You shall not read of any Sect or Order of men whatsoever, amongst whom, so many & such monsters haue bin found, as amongst them; Murtherers, Poysoners of their Predecessors, Simoniacks, Negromancers, Sodomites, Adulterers, Atheists, Church-robbers, &c. Yea such lewd persons ordinarily their Popes haue bin, that the time was in those parts, where the Pope most abode, that, when they would note a man for a notorious, extraordinarie Villaine or Knaue, they would say, *He is a Knaue or Villaine enough to be Pope. Non est opus instare.*

Again, they are not onely such Men of sinne in their owne persons; but the grand Patrons of sinne in others, and fruitfull parents of lewdnesse. So that it is as it were their trade to deuise, how they may either by lawes force men to sinne, or protect such as are wicked.

He is the great Patron of Ignorance, vsing all the power and authoritie he hath, to keep the people from the knowledge of God, so that they might not know the right way to serue him.

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He forbiddeth Mariage to all his Clergie, which are innumerable, the hundreth part whereof are idle bellies, not forced to any paines, but liuing like Epicures and Swine put vp to feeding: By meanes whereof, innumerable Adulteries, Fornications, Rapes, Sodomitries, Murthers of Infants, and other abominable acts are committed.

He vpholdeth and maintaineth Stewes, as it were Colledges and Societies of whores, wherevnto men may freely without punishment repaire: And counteth it better for some sort of persons, to keepe a whore, or to defile an other mans wife, then to haue a wife of their owne.

He counteth some finnes small and veniall, not deſeruing Hell fire; and no sinne ſo groſſe, but that for money he can pardon it: and he can diſpence with Inceſt, diuorce at his pleaſure, diſcharg men of their oaths, and abſolue ſubiects from their Oath of Allegiance &c. By meanes whereof, he hath bin the procurer and author of infinite treaſons, rebellions, aſſaſſinates, poyſonings, bloudſhed of many thouſands, murder of Princes and Potentates, and other the like villanies in all parts of Chriſtendome.

The ſecond Note followeth. He is the Childe of perdition. Wherein is ſignified that the Man of linne ſhall be ſuch an other as *Iudas* was. And ſurely *Iudas* may well be an Emblem, to repreſent the nature, diſpoſition, and condition of the Popes of Rome, for the moſt part. *Iudas* was a couetous wretch, and grudged that any thing ſhould go beſide his bag: ſo is the Pope. *Iudas* ſought all
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meanes to betray Christ; so doth the Pope in his members. *Iudas*, though Christ convinced his Conscience of the vilenes of the fact, and denounced such a wo against him, as might iustly haue terrified him, yet for all that held on his wicked purpose: so doth the Pope. *Iudas* in words and ceremoniall complement most honoured Christ, when he betrayed him: so doth the Pope. *Iudas* came to an euill end; so haue the most, if not all, of them. *Iudas* was the instrument of Christs death, and of his owne perdition: so is the Pope. None liue more like men, ordained to destruction then they.

3. The Antichrist here spoken of is one that opposeth himselfe against, and listeth himselfe vp aboue all that is called God. The Scriptures giue this Title not to God himselfe onely; but to Angels also *Psal. 8. 5. Hebr. 2. 6.* and to Magistrates, *I haue said, Ye are Gods*, saith the Psalmist. *Psal. 82. 6.* This propertie notably in both these respects agreeth to the Pope.

Concerning the first, nothing can be more euident, whether you respect the Bishop of Romes claime, or his practise.

He claimes to be in all Christian Dominions throughout the world, yea and of the whole world to be the Supreme Head and Gouvernour: That Emperors and Kings are but his Vassals and Subiects; that he hath authoritie to place them in their Thrones, and to cast them out againe; to absolue their Subiects from that loyaltie and alleageance, that they owe and haue sworne to them; that

that he is as the Sunne, and the Emperor but as the Moone, borrowing all light from him; that he is as Gold, and the Emperor as Lead; that Emperors and Kings are but as Sawes, and he as the Sawyer to moue them at his pleasure; that the Emperor is but his Sword-bearer, and his Creature; and the Imperiall Maieſtie as much vnder the Popes, as the Creature vnder God.

Concerning practise: hath hee not deposed Kings and Emperors? hath he not made them kiſſe his toe, hold his ſtirrop, waite bare-foot at his Pallace-gate, crowned Kings with his feete, made them carry him on their ſhoulders &c?

Againe, he aduanceth himſelfe aboue Angels and Diuels. For he claimeth to be Lord of all in Heauen, in Earth, and in Hell. One Pope in his Bull for the Iubile, commands the Angels in Heauen, to take ſuch ſoules out of Purgatorie, as dye by the way, and carry them inſtantly to Heauen.

Clement 6.

And for his liſting vp of himſelfe aboue God himſelfe, it is as plaine as any other matter. It is nothing with him to be another God on Earth. The Scriptures that are proper to God or Chriſt, as *Eſai. 60. 12. & 28. 16. Pſal. 24. 1. & 8. 6. Ioh. 10. 16. & 15. 5. & 3. 19. Apoc. 5. 5.* they apply vnto him; and he like the proud Man of Sin admits of them.

Yea, this is all too litle: He is aboue God, and that by his owne claime. He can binde where God looſeth, and loſe where he bindeth. He can diſpenſe with the Lawes of God, with both the
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Olde and the New Testament. His word is of more authoritie then Gods word is. And to sinne against his Lawes is (after a sort) to sinne against the Holy Ghost.

Lastly, this Man of Sinne is *arrogant*, not a *wicked* onely, but a *lawles* person; one that shaketh off all yoke, like a sonne of Belial, that liueth like an Outlaw, that refuseth to be ruled by any law, either diuine or humane. But who, more lawles then he that no law can hold either of God or man? That will giue lawes to all, but take none of any? that not onely claimeth power to breake lawes as he listeth himselfe, but can at his pleasure dispense so, not with mans law alone, but with Gods to, that he can make Treasons, Murthers, and Massacres, and the horriblest sins, that Gods law condemnes, acts pious and meritorious, whereby men shall deserue heauen?

Yea, who so lawlesse as he, that not onely refuseth himselfe to be ruled by any law, but exempteth all his shauelings, his principall members, from all subiection to lawes and ciuill iurisdiction, though the ordinance of God, that they may liue as they list, in all loosenes and lewdnes, without checke or controll?

And thus we haue shewed, both who is the Head of the Apostasie, foretold by the Apostle in this place, and where, both he and it are to be found.

Verf. 13.

Verſ. 13. *But we ought alwayes to giue thanks to God for you, Brethren, beloved of the Lord. -*

Hitherto of the Prophecie concerning the Univerſall & Catholicke Apoſtaſie of Chriſtians, from the true Faith and ſincere worſhip of Ieſus Chriſt, as it was planted by the Apoſtles; and of that Man of Sinne, that next and immediately vnder the Diuell, was to be ſupreme Head and Author thereof. A burdensome Prophecie to all that feared God, and ſuch a one as could not but make their hearts heauy, and poſſeſſe their ſoules with much feare and trembling. And therefore, the Apoſtle, before he paſſeth vnto any other matter, comforteth this Church he writes vnto, and therein laboureth to remoue that feare & ſorrow, which this Prophecie might caſt them into.

In the Conſolation,

1. He propoundeth the maine argument and matter of their Comfort.

2. He maketh ſpeciall Uſe thereof.

The matter or argument is ſet downe,

1. Generally,

2. More ſpecially.

The Effect of the generall Proposition is expreſſed in the Title he giues vnto them, *O yee beloved of the Lord*: as if he had ſaid, O my Brethren, though the condition of the Chriſtian world ſhall be fearfull, in regard of the power and tyrannie of that Man of Sinne: yet you neede not to be dismayed thereat. For the Lord loues you moſt

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deerely and tenderly ; and therefore will preferue and keep you from that fearfull Apostasie.

Whence we note ;

1. That the more that any Christian man or Church is beloued of the Lord, the more afraid they are of this Apostasie, and of that Man of Sin: and the more they are humbled and grieved to consider the same, and the more they shall feare it, and desire to be armed and strengthened against it, being conscious of their owne weaknes, to withstand so great assaults and temptations, as also the more they shall mourne and groane vnder the tyrannie and burden of it, or of any part or parcell of it ; the more present will the Spirit of God be, to yeeld comfort & consolation, and spirituall might, and strength vnto them, as here, he is vnto this Church.

And further, the more feelingly that a man shall be perswaded of the loue of God towards him ; the lesse cause he shall haue to be dismayed and faint-hearted in regard of this Apostasie. Art thou one belou'd of the Lord? Hadst thou a liuely sense thereof in thy soule? Verily, though by Prophecie it should be reuealed vnto thee, that all thy frends and acquaintance, the whole Towne and Realme where thou liuest, the whole Kingdome, wherein thou art a Subiect, should reuolt from Christ to Antichrist ; yea though thine owne eyes should behold it ; though thou shouldest see all the faithfull Pastors and Ministers of Christ, and amongst them those that haue bin the powerfull instruments of God to bring thee to the sense and loue of
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of God, to fall away from Ieſus Chriſt, and to receive the marke and character of the Beaſt: yet in the middeſt of ſo fearefull and ſo lamentable a ſpectacle, thou ſhalt finde comfort and ſtrength enough to ſupport thee, though thou ſtand alone againſt all the tempeſts and ſtormes, that Satan and his Vicar-generall can raiſe againſt thee.

Would we therefore ſecure our ſelves againſt ſuch tempeſts and brunts? Let vs labour to be beloved of the Lord, and to get vnto our ſelves all the ſignes and tokens thereof that we can. For there is none ſafe from Antichriſt, but thoſe, whom God hides in his owne bowels. And if once we feele our ſelves there, what need we care? They muſt pull out the Lords owne bowels, that pull vs our thence.

The Apoſtle ampliſieth this loue of God towards them, by the effect thereof: as if he had ſaid, My Brethren, you are ſo beloved of the Lord, that *I, Syluanus* and *Timothie*, thinke we can neuer ſufficiently giue God thanks for you in that regard. Wonderfull great, muſt that loue of God needs be towards this Church, that bindeth the Apoſtle and theſe Euangelists in ſo great a bond of thankfulnes vnto God for them.

1. The Apoſtle did not (though he might) ſay, *You ought*, but, *We ought*: whereby he ſheweth; that Gods loue towards this Church, did binde theſe worthy Miniſters in an euerlaſting bond vnto God. So that the more loue and grace God ſheweth vnto a people, the more bound vnto God are the Paſtors and Miniſters of that people. Doth

God manifest by any signes, that our people are beloued of him? As though therein we were beloued of the Lord, we are bound to be thankfull vnto God: yea, not Pastors and Ministers onely, but euery brother is bound in a bond vnto God for the loue and grace that God sheweth vnto a brother. For *Paul* speaketh this as a Brother, and not as a spirituall Father and Minister. Else he would not haue called them brethren, but children rather; if Gods loue towards this Church had wrought this effect in them, as they were Ministers onely. It is the dutie then of euery Christian, to be so affected with the grace, loue, and fauour that God shewes vnto any man, as if himselfe therein were specially bound vnto God; and he had therein himself, receiued a speciall grace and fauour from God. Let vs learne to esteeme our Brothers holinesse, his redemption, his ioy, his glory, his eternall happinesse, and all other signes and tokens, of Gods loue in Christ towards him, as so many parts and parcels of, and additions vnto our owne. Far be from vs that malignant spirit of *Cain*, vs especially that are Ministers, the more to hate, and to despise, and to disdaine and murmur and grudge and repine at, and persecute our brethren, the more signes and tokens of Gods loue and grace we see in them.

Further, would any of vs know how to binde our true Christian neighbours and brethren in the strongest bonds vnto vs? Let vs vse all the meanes, that we may shew our selues beloued of God. This is sufficient to binde them for euer to be
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thankfull vnto God for vs. We cannot better deserue one of an other, then by strriuing one to goe before an other in grace and fauour with God.

2. This band of thanksgiuing, though it be for them, yet it is not to them. Its no thanke to any Christian, that he is beloued of God: but all the thanke is due to God himselfe. The cause that we are beloued of God is not in our selues, but in God onely; and therefore is all the thanke due to him.

3. It is an euerlasting thanks, that is due to God: it is a debt that can neuer be paid, either in this life, or in the life to come; but that which must euer be paying, euen in heauen, and more in heauen then on earth, because there, it shall appeare indeed how beloued we are. It shall there be so many heauens vnto vs, to behold the heau'ns one of an other. So that to be admitted as spectators of that glory and ioy that is in others, will be vnspeakable joy and glory to vs, tho we had no other cause of either. Such comfort vnspeakable shall we haue, in the ioy and glory, and happinesse one of an other, streaming from the loue of God, that I shall neuer cease magnifying God for thee, nor thou for me. Such mutuall beames and rayes of glory, will reflect frō one vpon an other, that we shall not be able to tell, whether we haue more cause to thanke God for our selues, or for one an other; the ioy shall be so vnspeakable, that the one shall reape by the other.

4. Note here a speciall meanes, sanctified of God, to support our brethren, against the assaults
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of Antichrist. Let them see that we take notice of the graces of God that are in them; and that we are so affected with them, that we vnfeignedly acknowledge our selues bound to be thankfull vnto God for them. Little knowest thou, what power there is in this meanes, to support a weake brother, when he shall see, that the eyes of Gods seruants are fixed vpon him, that they esteeme his standing as a blessing of God vpon them. The generall neglect of this dutie, hath no doubt bin the occasion, that Antichrist hath preuailed against many a one, that haue fallen from the sinceritie of religion; because professors make so little one of an other, the Minister of his people, and people of their Minister, and one of an other.

— *that God hath from the beginning chosen you vnto saluation, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and faith in the truth.*

Here followeth the speciall matter or Argument of their Comfort; to wit, the certaintie of their Saluation, wherein specially consisteth Gods loue towards them; and from whence doth arise, that euerlasting bond of thanksgiuing aforesaid. As if he should say, This prophecie, concerning the dangerous times to come vnder Antichrist, neede not dismay you. For your saluation lyeth vpon a solide and firme foundation, against which all the gates of Hell shall neuer be able to preuaile. So that though Antichrist should come with the greatest efficacie of Satan, and with all the strength of

of Hell againſt you, yet he ſhould not be able to preuaile againſt you to your condemnation and deſtruction.

Let vs conſider then, what that firme and ſolide foundation is, in regard whereof he comforteth them thus. It is expreſſed in certaine degrees of Gods ſpeciall loue towards them, enwrapped together in theſe words.

The firſt degree is this, that God himſelfe had choſen and elected them vnto ſaluation, i. had voluntarily and freely, of his owne meere loue and good pleaſure, ſingled and ſeuered them out of the number of them, which ſhall be condemned, and had written their names in the Booke of Life, amongſt the number of them that were to be ſaued; and therefore they ſhould not need to feare the power of Antichriſt.

Queſt. How knew *Paul* this?

Anſ. Either by the euidence and demonſtration of that very Spirit, which ſtirred him vp to write this Epistle; or by ſome euident effects that he ſaw thereof in them. But I incline more to the former, or rather hold both.

Hence we learne;

1. That though the world be neuer ſo overwhelmed with Antichriſtian confuſion; though by his tyrannie and poyſoned inchantments, he neuer ſo much preuaile ouer the Chriſtian world; though by his power, he ſhould mingle heauen and earth together, and all the powers of hell were in his power; yet the Elect of the Lord ſhall notwithstanding be preſerued. The Lord will haue ſuch

such an eye vpon them, that he shall neuer doe any mortall hurt vnto them. But in the midst of all his furie, they shall be safe, and hold on their way to heauen, though they be oft foyled and ouerthrowne in the way.

2. The certainty and assurance of our election, is a mighty and powerfull preseruatiue against Antichrists Apostasie. It is that, that makes the Apostle vrge the certainty thereof vpon this occasion. And this is no doubt, the maine cause that makes Antichrist, and all his wicked limmes, such enemies thereunto. There is none that comes once to be perswaded of this, that he can haue any hope to seduce. And mens carelesnes herein, to make their election sure, is a great cause, that many become such Apostataes. Let vs therefore labour by all meanes to come to the assurance thereof: and then though Antichrist should bring with him Bishopricks, Arch-bishopricks, Cardinalships, Popedomes with him, to allure vs from Christ, & prisons, racks, gibbets, and fires to terrifie and affright vs, yet shall he neuer be able to withdraw vs from him.

The second degree is, that God had done this *from the beginning*. This may be taken either for, *from all eternitie*, or for, *from the fall of Adam*. In the one sense, it is taken for the decree it selfe of Election, which is eternall: in the other, for the first act in the execution thereof, out of the corrupt masse of all mankinde in *Adam*. It is needles to contend, whether sense is truer, or more fitteth this place: seeing either sufficiently argueth the vnremoueable

vnremoueable loue of God towards them; and the one cannot bee vnderstood without the other.

Now the consideration of this also serueth notably to strengthen this Church against the feare of Apostasie. For this election of God was not sudden, or since their profession of the Faith; but it was a matter decreed of God from all eternitie, and began to be executed while they were in the loynes of *Adam*, before they had any personall being. So that the loue that God beares to his elect and chosen ones, is not a sudden and a rash loue, like fire in straw and dry thornes, that makes vpon the sudden a great crackling, and blazeth, but is as soone almost out as in: But it is an ancient loue, an old affection, yea a loue and affection as old as himselfe: As soone as euer he was, and he euer hath bin, he loued them. And therefore there is no cause to feare, that he will suffer Satan or Antichrist so far to preuaile against them, that are so aunciently beloued of him: Seeing there can be no cause in them, or vs now, to make the Lord to cease to loue vs, but what hath bin present before the Lord, when he began to set his loue on vs, and would as well haue moued him then to refuse vs, as now to reject vs.

Note withall, by the way,

1. That this may serue as a speciall signe of one elect from eternitie, that Antichrist is not able to preuaile against him, to withdraw him from the sinceritie of his Christian profession.

2. That so long as Antichrist preuaileth against

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any, so long litle hope thereof can be had.

The third degree followeth, which consisteth in the meanes, that God hath ordained for the attaining of that saluation, which from the beginning he hath elected them vnto.

The Meanes are $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Inward.} \\ \text{Outward.} \end{array} \right.$

The first inward meanes of Saluation, is Sanctification; which is the puritie of the soule, from such filth and pollution, as it is capable of; or a conformitie of our wills, vnto Gods reuealed will, whereby the image of God is renewed againe in vs. He is an holy and sanctified man, that is afraid to do any thing, that God would not haue him to do, yea that he doth but suspect that God will not approue, and whose whole studie is how, in all things he may please God.

Whence we may learne;

1. That these two, *Sanctification* and *Saluation*, are not seuered in Gods Election; but go together. Those, whom God in his Election hath decreed to saue, he hath also decreed to sanctifie; and his Election is not grounded vpon our holinesse, but our holinesse vpon his election. So that this Sanctification is the very first act, and, entrance into our Saluation. So long as we are in sinne and vn-sanctified; so long are we in the gates of Hell, yea in Hell, though in Heauen. But when once we begin to be sanctified, then are we within heauen-gate, we haue one foote, as it were, ouer the threshold, yea though we were locally amongst the damned, and amidst all the Diuels in Hell. In
regard

regard whereof, one once ſaid well, in my minde, though a Papiſt, that *he had rather be in hell without ſinne, then with ſinne euen in heauen.*

Now, this Sanctification is deſcribed by the Author thereof, the *Spirit* of God. By the power of that Spirit, whereby they were elected to ſaluation, they are alſo ſanctified. And this Sanctification is a worke of God, as well as Election, and not an act of humane power or will. Otherwiſe, there were ſmall comfort in this, if we were elected to ſaluation, through ſuch a ſanctification, as were of mans owne will onely. For what hope could we then haue, to ſtand forth againſt all the temptations and aſſaults of Satan and Antichriſt? This ſanctification therefore is of Gods owne Spirit. He is the firſt mouer in the ſame. Which argueth, that there is in this ſanctification, a diuine efficacy and power indeed, ſuch, as againſt which, all the gates of Hell are not able to preuaile. For it is not a dead or ſenſeles qualitie of the ſoule, but a qualitie that hath a Spirit in it, that turnes and moues about, all the motions that are in a mans ſoule. And where Gods owne Spirit turnes the wheele one way, it paſſeth the ſtrength of all the Spirits in Hell, to turne it an other way. So that whoſoeuer feeles theſe motions in him (for they are not dead and ſenſeles motions) may thereby aſſure himſelfe, that he is one of Gods elect; and one, that though Antichriſt ſhould mingle heauen and earth together, yet ſhall he not be able to preuaile againſt him to his ruine and confuſion.

Note withall, that it being the ſanctification

of the Spirit, man cannot merit thereby. For what can man merit with God, by that which he hath from the Spirit of God, and for which therefore he standeth bound and endebted vnto God?

The second inward meanes, is, *Faith in the Truth*. Whether this be first or second in nature, I will not stand here to discusse: according to the diuers acceptions or degrees of sanctification, it may be in nature before or after; but in time they are together. There can be no true sanctification of the heart, till faith be in the heart; nor can there be faith in the heart, before there be sanctification there.

Now this is then, when the sanctifying Spirit of God doth in that manner reueale vnto the elect childe of God, so much of Gods will, as is needfull for him to know and practise for his owne saluation, that he assenteth vnto it and embraceth it. This Faith and Sanctification go hand in hand together. The motions of a sanctified Spirit, goe no further then the light of this truth, and this eye of faith doth direct. And what neede they feare to be seduced or drawne out of the way, that haue such a Spirit to moue them, such an eye and light, and rule to direct them?

Verf. 14. *Wherevnto he hath called you by our Gospel, to obtaine the glory of our Lord Iesus Christ.*

THe outward meanes, whereby the inward meanes were wrought, was the Ministerie of the

the Apoſtles and Euangelists, which he calleth *their Goſpell*. Whereby he declareth, that whatſo-
euer they miniſtred to the people, it was the Go-
ſpell: and therefore that we, that are Miniſters,
ſhould tread in their ſteps, and miniſter that
onely to Gods people, that we may avow to be
Goſpell.

By this Miniſterie, being nothing elſe but the
Miniſterie of the Goſpell, were they called (ſaith
the Apoſtle) *to ſanctification and faith in the truth*.
The Goſpell then, yea *our Goſpell*. i. the Miniſterie
of the Goſpell practiſed and inſtituted by the
Apoſtles, is Gods owne conſecrated inſtrument,
whereby the Spirit worketh ſanctification & faith.
Thus doth the Lord honor his Miniſterie: So that
they which are the deſpiſers thereof, neuer had
any true faith or ſanctification; and therefore are
a prey to Antichriſt. And ſurely who are they,
that he preuaileth againſt in our Kingdome? Are
they not maniſeſt deſpiſers of this ordinance? For
as for thoſe that are called by the ſame vnto ſan-
ctification and faith, they cannot but honor it as
the bleſſed inſtrument of their conuerſion and
eternall ſaluation.

He ſheweth further, wherein the end of this their
Miniſterie conſiſted, *in calling of them to the obtai-
ning of the glory of Chriſt*. i. of that euerlaſting glo-
ry and happines by Chriſt, which Chriſt our Head
himſelfe in Heauen now enioyeth.

So that this is a notable meanes to debase the
glory of Antichriſt, to fix our eyes on the glory
that Chriſt hath purchaſed for vs, and is entred
into

into heauen to take seisen and possession of, in our behalfe. And surely one maine cause, why a many are so carried away with the glittering shewes of Antichrists pompous estate, is because they haue not their mindes set, nor the eyes of their soules fixed, on that wonderfull, and vnutterable and inconceiuable glory, that for all Christs faithfull followers is prepared in heauen. All the glory of Antichrist, would be vile in their eyes, if they so did.

Verf. 15. *Therefore, Brethren, stand fast; and keepe the instructions, which you haue bin taught, either by word, or by our Epistle.*

THe Use and Application followeth. As if he had said; Seeing you haue so great matter of comfort, *Brethren, stand fast, &c.*

Wherein we are to consider these 3. things.

1. The dutie that he exhorteth them vnto.
2. The ground of the dutie.
3. The meanes of performing of the dutie.

The dutie is, that they *stand fast*. It is a metaphor borrowed from Souldiers, who in brunt of battell gather their strength together, that they may not be ouerthrowne. So he would haue them to do, to gather together all the strength they can, that they may stand against the brunt and storme of Antichrist.

Whence we may learne,

1. The beloued and elect of God shall bee powerfully and strongly assaulted by the Man of sinne,

sinne, and in great danger to fall into the Apostasie aforesaid, if they looke not vnto themselves.

2. That they must therefore gather all their force and strength together, to stand strongly to the defence of the true faith and religion, that no tempests and stormes may remoue them from it.

2. The ground of this dutie is implied in the word, *Therefore*: i. Seing that the Lord hath elected you &c, therefore stand fast.

The doctrine then of the certainty of our saluation, and of our election, is not a doctrine of securitie; but it hath this nature, in whomsoever it is found, to stir vp men so much the more to stand to the truth. So that the more that a man is assured of his saluation, the more he will strue to keep the faith. So that if he should see his name written in the booke of life, yet would not this make him wax secure, but so much the more carefull to please God, and so much the more resolute against the enemies of God. If a man should know that his body were in that case, that he could not be slaine in battell, howsoever he might be wounded, maimed and hurt, would that make him to yeeld himselfe to his enemies, or to suffer them to wound and hurt him? Would it not rather make him fight so much the more courageously.

3. The meanes follow of performing this dutie, whereby they and all other may stand fast.

The first is, that they *hold fast*, or *lay a sure hand*, (as the word signifieth) *upon the Apostles Traditions*. These Traditions are all such Ordinances of

of religion and diuine worship, as were taught and established by the Apostles and Euangelists, *whether by word or by Epistle*. For vnto them, whom the Apostles with their owne mouths preached, their words were of equall authoritie with their writings. But with vs, to whom they neuer spake, their writings onely are authentically, and not their words, because we know not what they spake more then they writ.

1. The dutie then is this, to lay hold with both hands on the doctrine of the Apostles, and not to suffer any part or parcell thereof to be wrung forth of our hands.

2. This shewes the meanes, whereby Antichrist hath so much preuailed; for that men haue not held fast the Apostles traditions, but the Churches of Christ haue suffered now one Ordinance, and then another, to be wrung out of their hands.

Vers. 16. Now the same Iesus Christ our Lord, and our God, euen the Father, which hath loued vs, and hath giuen vs euerlasting consolation, and good hope through grace;

17. Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in euery word and good worke.

THe second meanes of standing fast is in the hand of God: and it is twofold.

1. *Consolation of the heart.* Except the Lord from heauen send a comfortable and cheerefull heart, that it be not daunted and terrified, one shall hardly hold fast. Whereas so long as the Lord comforteth

comforteth the heart, ſo long we ſhall vphold and maintaine the faith.

2. God muſt alſo *eaſtabliſh vs*, and confirme vs *in euery word and good worke*, that we may ſo carry our ſelues in word and deed, that we giue no advantage to the aduerſarie. For if Antichriſt can trip vs in either, he will giue vs a dangerous blow.

The Apoſtle therefore concludeth this matter, with a prayer to Ieſus Chriſt, and to God the Father, ſtirring him thereunto, by mention of that free fauour of his toward them, whereby in Chriſt *he hath loved them, and giue them euerlaſting conſolation*, by putting them in *good hope* of eternall ſaluation *through grace*. Thereby teaching vs, that the maine ground of our aſſurance of future and further mercies from God, ariſeth from the conſideration of his former fauour and loue toward vs. And that therefore we muſt labour to get aſſurance of the one, if we deſire to haue our faith confirmed and ſtrengthned in the hopefull expectation of the other.

And thus much of the fourth part of this Epistle.



THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Verſ. 1. *Furthermore, Brethren, pray for vs, that the word of the Lord may haue free paſſage and be glorified, as it is with you.*

THE fiſt part of this Epiſtle followeth, which is a petition; wherein the Apoſtle becometh an earneſt ſuter vnto the Church that he writes vnto. And what doth he ſue for? For their prayers. He entreateth them that they would *pray for him*, & for *Syluanus* and *Timothy* his fellow-labourers. And to the end that he might obtaine his deſire, he calleth vpon them by the name of *Brethren*, as he hath done twiſe or thriſe in this Epiſtle already. Wherein we muſt not thinke, that the Apoſtle, according to the common vſage of this age, doth it onely for courtly complement; (a thing far from the diſpoſition of that Spirit, by which he writ this Epiſtle) but he doth vnſainedly deſire this office at their hands, as a principall fruit of their brotherly loue and affection towards him, and as a matter whereby he expecteth

pecteth a speciall blessing from God.

Whence we may learne these lessons:

1. That it is the dutie of Christian brethren, mutually to pray one for an other vnto God their Father. *Paul* he prayes for the *Thessalonians*: and he prayes them to pray for him. The brethren in Christ doe mutually merit one an others prayers, when they pray one for an other. Doe I pray vnto God for thee? I haue therein deserued that thou shouldst pray for me. The wages of an hired labourer are no more due to him, then thy prayers are due vnto me. And thou shalt answer at Gods tribunall vpon an action of debt and default of payment, if thou answer not the same. Though I should not pray for thee, yet art thou bound to pray for me: the Lord hath laid this law vpon vs, to pray euen for them that persecute vs, and to blesse them that curse vs: How much more are we then to pray for them that pray for vs, and to blesse them that blesse vs?

And as this is a mutuall dutie and debt that one Christian owes to an other: so ought all Christians to make that reckoning of this debt, as that they should (vpon all occasions) demand and require it, and not remit or forgiue it. We can demand our temporall debts, and will thinke much to remit a penny in the payment of a great summe. But for this spirituall debt, we can be content to let it goe and neuer demand it. Or if we do at any time demand it: it is but for ceremonie and fashion: we care not whither men pay it or no. This shewes (beloued) that we make no reckoning or account
of

of an others prayers. For if we did, we would oftner demand them then we do : And the rather, becauſe the debt is of that nature, that the more we vrge the payment thereof, the more we fauour the perſon indebted : & the more we neglect to vrge the ſame, the more wrong we doe vnto him. For there is no prayer that he makes for vs, but he obtaines thereby as great a bleſſing for himſelfe as for vs.

2. If we deſire that others ſhould pray effectually vnto God for vs ; let them ſee that we eſteem them as brethren ; and let vs ſo demeane our ſelues towards them, as they may eſteeme of vs as brethren. For howſoeuer the prayers of the faithfull may do good to them that as yet are not brethren in Chriſt : yet is there a more liuely feeling of the efficacie and power of prayer, and of the ſweet influences of Gods graces obtained by them, when profeſſed brethren pray one for another. And onely by their prayers can we looke to get good that are our brethren. For otherwiſe their prayers are an abomination to God, and their bleſſings in themſelues but ſo many curſes.

3. The prayers of the faithfull are the common goods of the Church. And there are none ſo high and great in fauour with God, but they ſtand in neede of the prayers of others, euen of their inferiours. Behold here *Paul* ; a great Apoſtle of Ieſus Chriſt, that had bin rapt vp into the third heauen, and there heard things vnutterable ; he that had the Spirit of Prophecie, and the giſt of working miracles, and who was in a ſingular manner illuminate

minate in the myserie of the Gospell, and inspired to be a pen-man of holy Scripture, desires the prayers of this poore Church. Would that Spirit, by which he writ this Epistle, haue suffred him so to haue done, but that through the same Spirit, he had a liuely sense of his owne neede, and a confidence that he should be the better blessed by meanes of them, and that God would for their sakes shew the more fauour vnto him? There are none therefore so low & meane in Gods Church, but the highest may be beholden to them for their prayers. *Paul* here desires the *Thessalonians* to speake to and entreat God for him and his fellowes.

This should teach vs to stir vp this gift in our selues, and highly to esteeme the prayers euen of the meanest of Gods seruants. For if the Spirit of God taught *Paul* to make that reckoning of them, much more ought we, euen the Ministers, who as we are many degrees inferiour to *Paul*, so doe we by so many degrees more need the helpe of the prayers of the meanest of Gods people; euen we, I say, that are Ministers do need the prayers of our people; and the people need to pray for their Minister: yea the meanest of them must learne to be Orators vnto God for him, if they looke to reap fruit by his labours. And this no doubt is one maine cause, that the Lord doth no more blesse our labours vnto you, because you neuer pray for vs; nay, because many of you cannot pray for vs.

The Apostle doth not onely in generall require
this

this Churches prayers ; but he giues them ſpeciall directions concerning the matter of thoſe prayers, which he would haue them to make for him.

Wherein in generall, and by the way he teacheth, that if Miniſters will looke to reap fruit from the prayers of their Churches, they muſt teach and direct them how to pray, and informe them in the ſpeciall matter of their prayers. We muſt not onely call vpon men to pray, but we muſt teach them how to pray, as both CHRIST and I O H N taught their Diſciples. It is very fitting and neceſſarie, that Chriſtians ſhould haue directions for prayer, yea and for the further helpe of their weaknes, ſet formes of prayer alſo, though they are not to be tied onely vnto them, and ſtinted & ſtreitned ſo as they may not uſe any other prayers ; but according to the praſtiſe of our Churches, that preſcribe and uſe ſet formes indeed, but are not ſo limited or tied to them, but that they may and doe uſe other conceiued formes alſo, as occaſion is offered, contrary to the calumniation of our ſeparating Browniſts.

The ſpeciall matter, he directeth them to pray for, is 1. a propagation of the Goſpell.

2. the meanes thereof.

And 1. That it may haue a free and ſpeedy paſſage in all places :

2. That it may be glorified elſe where alſo, as it was among them.

The word here tranſlated *free paſſage*, and that not vnfitly, ſignifieth a running as it were vpon wheelles. So that he would haue them to pray that the

the Gospell of Christ might haue a swift course, and might most speedily, by the meanes of him, and the rest of the Apostles and Euangelists, be caried throughout the world, as it were vpon the wheelles of chariots drawne with winged horses.

Obiect. Why? this concerneth the Lord himselfe and his owne glory, to let his owne word haue a free passage. Will he send Embassadors into the world, and not giue them safe-conduct, when he hath supreme authoritie & power to do what he will? But must men beg and intreat the Lord, that his owne word may haue passage, which so much concerneth himselfe?

For answer hereunto we are to know, that the propagation of the Gospell, concerneth our good as well as Gods glory. And it is for our sins, that he doth not make a way for the passage thereof: and therefore he looketh that we should stir him vp to giue passage to it by our prayers.

Whence we may obserue;

1. That the faithfull Ministers of God, desire and endeuour nothing more, then that the Gospell may spread it selfe, and may haue prosperous successe in all places. So that they do not thinke they haue done their dutie, when they preach, when and where a dore is opened vnto them, but they desire, and vse meanes, that the Gospell may be preached, where a dore is shut against it: yea they count it the greater aduantage vnto them, the more the Gospell is propagated. And those (out of question) are the Ministers of Antichrist, and not of Christ, who labour so much as lies in them,

to

to put fetters and ſhackels vpon the Goſpell, that it may not ſo freely haue his courſe, and that ſtop the paſſages and wayes thereof. And far are they alſo from *Pauls* ſpirit, that will not preach at all, no not in thoſe places, where not onely they haue a free paſſage and liberty, but where they are bound vnto it by the lawes of God and man, and by their owne faithfull promiſe. It is a ſigne that ſuch men make no reckoning, of the Lords word or the propagation of it. But this is the height of the delire of all faithfull Miniſters and people in this life, that the Goſpell may haue liberty and ſpread it ſelfe, and haue euery where a free paſſage without oppoſition.

2. We learne, that the prayer of Gods Churches and people, is an effectuell meanes, for the procuring of the liberty of the Goſpell. We ſee how many lets and impediments the Goſpell hath: how hardly, without the loſſe of ſome lim, or the wrenching of ſome member, it can paſſe any way; the paſſages are made ſo ſtreit; there are ſo many ditches caſt vp in the way, ſo many ſecret pits digged, &c. This the Lord doth to ſtir vp his people to prayer. And no doubt, the want of prayer, is one maine cauſe, that the Goſpell hath no freer paſſage.

Neither muſt men poſt off this dutie to the Miniſters thereof onely, but euery Chriſtian, how meane ſo euer, muſt performe it. *Paul* no doubt prayed himſelfe for this. But he intreateth theſe Chriſtians alſo to pray. And happily the Lord may heare the prayers of a ſimple plaine Chriſtian,

when he neglecteth the prayers of them of greater note; yea he may yeeld the rather to the prayers of *Paul* for the prayers sake of these poore *Thessalonians*.

3. Be the meanes neuer so worthy and excellent, yet without Gods speciall assistance, the Gospell shall finde impediments enough. *Paul* himselfe, a man of admirable endowments, whose excellencie, one would haue thought, might haue broken through all impediments, was not able to do it, but was faine himselfe to pray, and to set others also a worke to pray, that the Gospell which he did carry, which had so many graces attending vpon it, might finde free passage. If therefore all the Ministers of the Gospell, had each of them as many Graces and Muses attending vpon their ministerie, as *Paul* himselfe had; yet they must not looke that the Gospell which they bring, should find in all places, and amongst all persons, present intertainment: nay happily, the greater gifts, the greater opposition. If *Paul* himselfe, accompanied with *Silvanus* and *Timothie*, should cary the Gospell from village to village, nay if *CHRIST* himselfe, in his humane nature, should preach in our streets, and worke neuer so many miracles for the confirmation of the Gospell; yet except God ioyne his hand vnto this worke, it will finde no passage. How doth our Sauour mourne ouer *Ierusalem*? What fearfull woes doth he denounce against *Chorazin*, *Bethsaida*, and *Caper-naum*, where he had often preached, for denying passage vnto the Gospell? Ministers therefore are
not

not to be discouraged, when either the course of their Ministerie is interrupted, or the Gospell which they preach is not admitted. It was *Pauls* case; it was *Christs* owne: and theirs it would be, if they were in thy place. They that will not heare thee, would not heare *Paul*, or *Peter*, or *Christ*, if they should stand in thy roome.

The Apostle would not onely haue them pray, that the Gospell might haue a free passage, that is, that it might speedily without any let, runne and spread it selfe speedily in all places; but secondly, that it may be glorified, and in that manner glorified, as it was amongst the Thessalonians. He would not onely haue them to pray, that himselfe and other the Apostles might haue liberty to preach the Gospell in all places; but also that it might finde glorious entertainment in all places, as it found already in many famous and renowned Cities, especially this of Thessalonica. It is not enough then, that the Gospell hath sounded in our eares, that we haue heard wisdom in our streets and gates lifting vp hir voice, but we must glorifie and honour it, and that according to the patterne of this Church.

Let vs then breifely consider, wherein the glorification of the Gospell consisteth: and therein follow the patterne of this Church, so far as *Paul* himselfe giueth testimonie of them in both these Epistles.

To glorifie the Gospell therefore, as these Thessalonians did, is

1. To hearken vnto it, to receiue, and to beleeue

it not as the word of man, but as it is indeed, the word of God: so did this Church. 1. *Theffal.* 2. 13. & 1. 5.

2. To be moued and perswaded thereby, to forsake our sinnes of what nature soeuer, euen our Gods, our idolatry. This Church left their Idols to serue the liuing God. 1. *Theff.* 1. 9.

Verf. 2. *And that we may be deliuered from unreasonable, and wicked men. —*

THE second part of his direction followeth, which is deprecation. Wherein he requireth them to pray against a speciall euill, that they were in danger of, by meanes whereof, the free passage of the Gospel was in danger to be greatly hindred, and the glory thereof much defaced. The deprecation is this, *that they may be deliuered from unreasonable and wicked men.*

The word translated *unreasonable*, is vnderstood of such as we call grosse, shameles, impudent, peruers, and peeuish men, such as care not how grosse, vile and absurd they shew themselves, so they may compasse their owne wicked wils.

The word translated *wicked*, by deriuation, signifieth, such as put good men to labour and trouble, and thereby vse all meanes to vex and disquiet them: which is indeed a speciall propertie of a wicked man, and that principally, which we call wickednes. From such persons, as these, *Paul* desireth to be deliuered, and to this end, desires the prayers of this Church.

Whence

Whence let vs note these points following:

1. That those which principally oppose the Gospell of Iesus Christ, hindring the free passage thereof, are shameles, vile and absurd men, such as care not what men thinke or speake of them, so they may bring about their lewd desires; men whose industry and labour is spent, in bringing labour & molestation and vexation vpon them, that will not run forth with themselves into the same riot. And the Gospell, the more it sheweth it selfe, the more will it discover the shamelesnes & grossenes and wickednes of them that are the enemies thereof. So that they, which (before the publishing thereof) haue had the name of modest, wise, discreet men, shall (the more they oppose against the same) shew themselves the more absurd and wicked. No modest, no good man can be an enemy to the Gospell, but such onely as nourish in them some grosse wickednes, which the Gospell discovereth; in regard whereof, they hate the Gospell, and all good meanes of the knowledge thereof. And out of this hatred of the Gospell, & desire still to hide their sinne, the more they seeke to hide them, the more they discover them.

2. There was neuer any time of the Gospell so happy, as to be free from such lets and impediments, euen in the primitiue times thereof, when it was most purely and powerfully preached, and shined in the fulnes of glory without the staines and blemishes of mans inventions; yet were there impudent, shameles and grosse men, that opposed against it, and hindred oftentimes the free passage thereof.

thereof. And therefore neuer let vs looke to see those happy dayes, wherein the Gospell shall haue no let, but shall haue a free course.

And further, be the persons that cary the Gospell neuer so worthy, of neuer so eminent gifts, speaking with neuer such euidence and demonstration of truth; yet all this will not suffice to get the Gospell a free passage: But were all the Ministers of Christ of as worthy gifts as *Peter* and *Paul*; yet should they finde faces that durst and would resist them, and despise the Gospell brought by them. Yea the worthier gifts that a Minister hath, and the more Graces he commeth attended withall, the more opposition shall he finde.

We should not therefore be dismayed, when we meete with grosse and wicked men, hauing the Apostles, yea Christ himselfe for our companions therein. But let vs learne by our owne prayers, & by the help of others to seeke to be freed from them: And let vs assure our selues, that there is great force in our prayers to that end, both for owne and others deliuerances. And when we see wicked and peruerse men preuaile against the Gospell, let vs feare that we are defectiue in this dutie; and let it stir vs vp the more vnto the same. These are the weapons, wherewith we are to fight for this libertie. Thus are the flocke to fight for their Pastor. And these are such weapons, as cannot be taken from the seruants of Christ. And they are such, wherewith they so wound the aduers party, as they cannot saue themselves.

— *For all men haue not faith.*

In these words he preuenteth a secret doubt, that might arise in their mindes, vpon the deprecation aforesaid. For they might maruaile with themselves, what should be the reason, that any should be so peeuish and wicked, as to molest them, for bringing so acceptable a message as this; especially they hauing such gifts and abiliments, to make good the same vnto the heart and conscience of any reasonable man. He therefore telleth them, that *Faith belongs not vnto all*. i. all haue not grace giuen them of God, to belecue and imbrace the Gospell: and therefore that such will be sure to oppose themselves against the doctrine of it, and with might and maine hinder the free course thereof. For which cause he would haue them in this regard to pray for him and his fellow-labourers.

Whence we learne;

1. That there are some sort of men, to whom Faith doth not appertaine, and by consequent, Saluation, whereof Faith is the euidence. The Holy Ghosts phrase is more then our translation soundeth; for Faith may appertaine to them that haue it not: but it may more fully be translated, *Faith belongs not to all*; but it is a gift that God in mercy will bestow vpon some persons onely, euen vpon those alone, that he hath resolutely purposed to bestow heauen vpon, and vpon no other. Hence is it called *the faith of the Elect*. And in *Ti. 1. 1.*
the

Act. 13. 48.

the Acts it is said, that *so many as were ordained to life everlasting, beleueed.*

1. The Use hereof, may be to stir vs vp to strue to know whether we be amongst the number of them, vnto whom Faith appertaineth. For till then we cannot know, whither we be of the number of them that shall be saued.

2. Hence it appeares, that it is not in the power of any outward meanes whatsoeuer, to beget faith in them, vnto whom it belongs not. If *Paul* himselfe should preach the Gospell neuer so sincerely and powerfully; if he should confirme it with neuer such miracles; yet were not this enough to beget faith in them. It is the Lords owne immediate worke to bow and frame the heart vnto the word. Otherwise the more powerfully it is preached, and by the more miracles it is confirmed, the more peeuish and wicked, men shew themselves against it. Else it could not be, but all men, that the Apostles preached vnto, should haue faith, if the outward meanes alone were sufficient.

Which sheweth the vaine conceits of them, which thinke they may easily beleue, when they list themselves. Whereas except the Lord giue the gift, they should not beleue, though lying on their death-beds, they should haue *Peter* and *Paul* preaching to them. And what hope can men haue, that God will bestow that gift vpon them at their death, which when he offers them, they despise in their life.

3. It is a fearfull signe of a man that Faith belongs

longs not vnto, when he sheweth himself a wicked and vnreasonable man towards them that preach the Gospell: when men set themselues to hinder the free passage thereof, and hate and persecute the Ministers of it. This is argued here by the Apostles reasoning.

And on the contrary side, it is a comfortable signe of one that faith belongs vnto, if he loue and entertaine the Gospell, and aduance the free passage of it. For there is no reprobate, but to his power he hates and persecutes it. Many wicked men and infidels are quiet indeed, but the reason is, because they want power and authoritie, or God by some secret worke restraineth their rage.

4. Hence we learne the true cause, why men are so vnreasonable and wicked against the Gospell, that no godly man can safely and securely preach it among them: it is infidelitie. And a godly man had as good liue among Tigers and Beares as such.

And againe, that Faith maketh men gentle and quiet: so that no man can hope here to liue happily and quietly, but in the society of them, with whom he must liue for euer. And therefore let vs desire to ioyne our selues in society to such, with whom we shall finde content in this life, and conuerse eternally with, in the life to come.

As also, let it not discourage vs, that so few doe belecue, seeing that *Faith belongs not to all.*

Verf. 3. *But God is faithfull, who will stabliff you,
and keepe you from that euill one.*

Here followeth a second preoccupation, wherein, lest that vnderstanding what opposition the Ministerie of the Apostles was to haue, whereupon their faith was grounded, they should feare by this meanes to fall from the faith; he therefore comforteth & strengthneth them from the assurance of diuine assistance; as if he had said; Let it not trouble you, that our Ministerie, shall in this manner be opposed, neither feare you shipwrack of your faith: For had the Gospell, which you professe and belecue, neuer so many enemies; and were you that belecue and professe it neuer so weake, yet the Lord will support and defend you himselfe.

Whence we may note;

1. In generall:

1. That it is the propertie of true beleeuers, and of all them that haue receiued the sauing grace of God, to feele their owne weaknes, and the feeblenes of Gods graces in themselues, and in the sense thereof to feare exceedingly the losse of Gods graces in themselues. The couetous man cannot so much feare the losse of his goods, as he or she that is truly called, doth feare the losse of grace. Which sheweth, that Faith, Hope, Repentance, and all other sauing graces attending vpon them, are so louely, and bring such sweetnes and content with them, that he that once hath them,

them; would neuer by his good-will part with them: and therefore pray they, *Lead vs not into temptation.*

This then is a great signe of gráce, to be afraid to loose it, and in that regard to be jealous ouer a mans owne corruptions, and to feare them; and not to satisfie himselfe in the graces receiued, but to desire to haue them multiplied and increased. And on the other side, a fearefull token it is, of one vtterly destitute of grace, not to feare the losse of grace; we must *worke out our saluation with feare and trembling.* See 2. Pet. 1. 5, 10. Philp. 2. 11.

2. It is the dutie of Christians, especially Gods Ministers, to vse all good meanes to hearten and incourage the Saints of God, who feare their own weaknes, that they may not be ouerwhelmed with feare; but that they may go on in the course of a Christian life with hope & confidence amidst all terrors and feares.

More particularly; he doth not say, that they are strong and sufficiently armed of themselues; but that they shall be established and defended by the Lord: Neither doth he put them in hope, to be defended from all whatsoener euill; but that they shall be defended from *that euill one*, meaning the Diuell: And for their further securitie herein, he telleth them, that *the Lord is faithfull*, he hath promised it, and therefore will performe it. So 1. Job. 2. 13.

Whence we learne:

1. That the strength of Gods children to perseuere in grace, is not in themselues, and in the

strength and power of their owne heart and soule, but in the hand of God : and therefore Christians must not encourage themselues or other , in the confidence of their owne strength and power, but of the strength and power of God in Iesus Christ. For let God neuer so litle forsake his childe, and leaue him to himselfe ; and there is no sin so foule that he may not fall into : And therefore, let vs alwayes feare in regard of our selues, and hope and trust onely in respect of God.

2. Consider here a double worke of God,

1. To *establissh* a Christian,

2. To *defend him*.

There are some buildings, in regard of the weaknes of them, and the mixture of bad and rotten matter, so infirme, that of themselues (vnlesse they be supported and propped) they cannot stand, though they be not assaulted with windes and stormes, or though men do not set their force against them to fire or batter them. And secondly, others, though neuer so strong, yet in time of warre they may be ruined, if they be not by some other power defended and protected. In like manner here, partly in regard of our owne weaknes and mixture of corruptions, and that in some more then in others, as also partly in regard of the furious assaults of the aduers party, which the best of themselues were neuer able to with-stand, we haue neede of double aide and assistance from aboue, partly to support vs in regard of the one, and partly to protect vs in regard of the other.

3. The party that Christians are most to feare,
is

is *that euill one*, the Diuell. They need not care for all the power of wicked men, they can but hurt the body; but he mischieues the soule. And so long are we free from the Diuell, as we can keepe our soules from sin. Neither can Christians any longer be free from him, then God himselfe shall with his owne power support them, and fight for them. Otherwise such is our corruption & weaknes, that all the Saints and Angels in Heauen, would not be able to keep vs from the power of Satan.

4. All sincere Christians may assure themselves, that God will so stablish and defend them against that euill one, that he shall neuer be able to preuaile against them, vtterly to ruine them, or Gods grace in them. God hath promised to protect them, and hath pawned his faith on it, which is as sure and as vnchangeable as himselfe.

Verf. 4. *And we are perswaded of you through the Lord, that you both doe, and will doe the things that we command you.*

Hitherto of the Apostles first petition or exhortation: a second followeth; wherein, vnder a godly confidence in them, he closely exhorteth and entreateth them to do the things that he had giuen them in charge: as if he had said, I earnestly beseech you, that you would do those things, which from the Lord I haue giuen you in charge, euen as now also you do. Which petition of his hath some dependance vpon the former consolation:

consolation: For vpon that condition might they hope that God would stablish them and defend them from that euill one, if they were carefull to do those things that the Apostles enioyned them.

Now what was it, that the Apostle and his fellow labourers, *Sylvanus* and *Timothy* enioyned them, but to obey the Gospell, which containeth precepts of Faith and Repentance from dead works?

1. Therefore it is the dutie of Christian men, if they will be sure of Gods protection & assistance against Satan, to do those things, and to do them constantly, that are taught them by the Apostles & Euangelists in the Gospell; yea that are taught them by their owne Ministers out of Gods word. God, as he is faithfull in himselfe, so he stablisheth those that be such. No other can hope for protection from him; but are exposed vnarmed to the power of Satan. To do the things enioyned by the Apostles of Christ, is the onely meanes whereby we may blesse our selues from the power of the Deuill; other courses are but mockeries, of the Diuels owne deuiling.

2. It is the office of Ministers, to hope the best of the piety and perseuerance of their people, where they discern any good thing in them. That which also, it is fit for them to make knowne to their flocke. For by this meanes will the soules of the godly be the more encouraged to goe on in that good course that they are entred into. And on the other side, the peoples faith oft groweth faint, when they perceiue that their
Pastors

Pastors hope waxeth faint of them.

3. The confidence which they vse, and ought to haue of the perseuerance in well-doing of others, though neuer so godly, hath not its ground in themselves, but in God. For it is of God, not of our selues, and our owne meere will, that we do that, that is acceptable vnto God. The Apostle therefore trusteth *in the Lord* of them, he trusteth not in them themselves. Those then, that the Lord hath decreed to stablish and defend from Satan, those doth he enable (by the power of his grace, and the instinct of his Spirit) to perseuere in such good works, as by his Ministers they are enjoined.

4. Out of this certaine faith and assurance that God will thus stablish and defend them, the godly ought not to grow retches, but to be the more diligent and carefull to yeeld obedience to the Ministerie of the Gospell.

Verf. 5. *And the Lord guide your hearts to the loue of God, and the waiting for of Christ.*

NOW that through Gods helpe they may constantly perseuer in the practise and performance of those things, that by the Apostles were enjoined them; the Apostle wisheth vnto them the principall meanes, whereby they may perseuer in Euangelicall obedience to the Ministerie; to wit, *that their hearts may be directed by God to the loue of God, and the patient expectation of Christ.*

By

By the *L O R D* here seemeth to be vnderstood the Holy Ghost ; as by *G O D*, God the Father. And so haue we the three persons here distinctly set downe.

The word *καὶ δὲ κύριος*, signifieth by a right line to direct one to somewhat. Now the Lord is said to direct the heart, when he turneth it to something, causing it to affect it and delight in it, which before it was estranged from, and abhorred.

Guard.

The *patient expectation of Christ*, is such an expectation of him, as whereby expecting all benefit by him, we are encouraged patiently to endure any thing for him.

Hence we gather :

1. That these two things are principally necessarie vnto godly perseuerance, such as was spoken of before, *the loue of God, and the patient expectation of Christ*. For the loue of some good thing past or present, and the expectation of some future good, are wont to make vs more cheerefull in the doing of our duties. Vnlesse therefore a mans heart be inflamed with the loue of God, whom in the Gospell he yeeldeth obedience vnto ; as also vnlesse he be possessed with an earnest expectation of Christ, and a longing for him, that so he may worke with much patience in hope of reward ; our Euangelicall obedience will soone wax faint. But a heart inspired with these graces, will stir vp the whole man to do euery thing commanded in the Gospell with all constancie. And contrariwise, where this constancie of obedience is not, it is a signe that this loue of God, and this expectation

tion of Christ is wholly wanting in the hearts of such.

2. That euen the hearts of the faithfull are in their owne nature estranged from the loue of God and the expectation of Christ; insomuch that they would wholly swerue and wander from either, were they caried by their owne proper motion, which would rather cary them to an hatred of God, and a despaire of Christ.

3. The heart is directed, disposed and moued by God alone, who directeth it as by a streight line to the loue of himselfe, and to the expectation of Christ, i. of eternall saluation in and by Christ. Would a Pastor therefore haue his people perseuere in well-doing according to the precepts of the Gospell? Let him by earnest prayer intreat of God, that he will be pleased to direct their hearts to the loue of himselfe, and the expectation of his Christ.

Verf. 6. *We charge you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Iesus Christ. —*

Here beginneth the sixt part of this Epistle; which containeth a Christian reprehension, laid downe in forme of a denunciation.

And it is $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Generall. } \textit{vers. 6. - 11.} \\ \text{Speciall. } \textit{vers. 11. - 16.} \end{array} \right.$

In the generall denunciation come to bee considered,

1. The manner.
2. The matter.

Z

In

In the manner he sheweth,

1. With what affection,
2. With what authoritie he vseth this denunciation.

1. His affection appears in the title of *brethren*, which he oft repeateth in this short Epistle ; thereby teaching how necessarie it is for the edification of others, that our brotherly loue towards them do oft appeare to them. Neither can we hope that either our exhortations or admonitions, much lesse our reprehensions should preuaile ought with others, vnlesse they be heared with brotherly loue, and appeare euidently to streame from a heart fraught with it. Euill therfore performe they these offices, whose admonitions and reprehensions are dipped in gall and vinegar. And yet alas such are the reproofes of most Christians, nothing for the most part but purgations of their owne rancor and choler.

2. His authoritie followeth ; He chargeth them *in the name of our Lord Iesus Christ*, that is, by that authoritie which he had from Christ. He giueth no charge in his owne name, but in the name of Christ, his and their Soueraigne Lord. Wherein we are taught, that our denunciations and reprehensions, if they be truly Christian ones, must be grounded vpon the authoritie of Christ : And Ministers ought to take heede, that they presume not to reprove ought, but what they haue in charge from Christ to reprove. It beseemeth not a Minister, to come in the name of any other. And it is an hainous sin, for a man to come in the name of

of Christ with a counterfeite charge; and in his name to deliuer a reproofe hatched in his owne braine.

Furthermore, how dreadfull are those denunciations, that are truly done in this Name? and what a contempt of Christ himselfe is it to set light by them? Those that charge ought in the Kings name, by vertue of their authoritie from him, though but meane men otherwise, are not wont to be contemned, vnlesse it be of desperate ruffians & roisters: what desperate wretches are they then that dare despise & set light by them that enjoyne ought in the name of Christ? And yet alas, how many euery where are there, that no more regard such denunciations done in his name, then the hissing of a Goose?

—*That you with-draw your selues from euery brother that walketh inordinately, and not after the instruction, which he receiued of vs.*

The matter of his denunciation followeth: which is this, *that they withdraw themselves from disordered persons.* Wherein is contained a close reprehension.

By *brother*, he vnderstandeth a Christian in externall profession, and a member of the visible Church.

To walke, is to liue, and to hold on a continued course of life. A metaphoricall speech very vsuall in Scripture, and therefore needing no further explication.

Αἰσχροί, *inordinately*. Αἰσχροί, or *persons inordinate*, are such as obserue not that order, that by the rule of reason, and right of law is prescribed them: and it seemeth to be taken from souldiers, that keepe not their order, by their Captaine assigned them, that breake their ranck, and so breed a confusion in the whole Band. Here it is applied vnto such as are of dissolute behauour, and will not endure to be kept within compasse of their dutie and office.

To withdraw themselves from them, is to abstaine from society and familiarity with them; not to conuerse familiarly with, but to cary themselves strangely towards them.

The meaning of the words then is this, that they should hereafter forbear and cease to haue familiar conuersation or acquaintance with all such, though professing the same religion that they did, which liue loosely, and not according to those rules and courses, that in the Gospell are prescribed.

Whence we learne:

1. That it is the dutie of all Christians to liue orderly, and not as they list themselves. They must in their life and conuersation, and in the whole course and tenor of it, obserue a due and decent order, and shun all disorder, as contrary to true Christianitie.

2. That there were euen in the times of the Apostles, amongst those that of their own accord, without any external constraint of the Magistrate, gaue

gaue their names vp vnto Christ, some that walked disorderly, & would not endure to be kept within the lists & limits of their duty. How much more then may the like be expected in these times, wherein, the most professe Christ more for feare of mans law, then of their owne free accord? It is neuer therefore to be hoped, that any Churches, be they neuer so well constituted, will be free from all scandals and offences. In this Church, as well constituted as euer any, yet were there some professors, who by their bad behauiour, stained and blemished the Gospell professed by them.

3. That the company and familiarity of such is, as the plague it self, to be shunned. For this vehement manner of denunciation euidently sheweth, not onely that Christian men are hardly withdrawne from the society of such; but that it is exceeding dangerous to cleane to them, and to be inward with them. Now how far forth this separation ought to reach, we will shew when we come to the 15. verse.

See 1. Cor. 5. 6,
11.

In these words, and *not according to the doctrine deliuered by vs*, the Apostle expoundeth himselfe what he ment by *walking inordinately*, to wit, not to cary ones selfe according to that instruction that the Apostle had giuen. The Apostles then are as guides vnto vs; and their writings, since the decease of them, the rule and square of our course and life; from which to walke aside, that is, in a continued and ordinarie course to swerue, is to walke inordinately.

They are not therefore to be accounted to walke inordinately,

inordinately, that yeeld not to our pleasures and our traditions, but that neglect those instructions and institutions, which they haue receiued from the Apostles, as deliuered by them, and ours so far as we can proue them to agree with those.

Verf. 7. *For ye your selues know, how ye ought to follow vs: for we behaued not our selues inordinately among you.*

Here follow two Reasons of the former reprehension.

The effect of the former is this:

To liue disorderly is far from the example of my selfe, and my fellow-labourers, *Sylvanus*, and *Timothie*, when we were among you.

They are not therefore to be imbraced by you, but to be forsaken of you, that take a contrary course.

The Antecedent of the Argument is in the 7. verse: the consequent is to be repeated out of the 6. verse

From the Antecedent we learne, that the higher place Christians haue in the Church, the lesse it becometh them to liue disorderly: yea rather the more regard ought they to haue to their life and conuersation in the Church of God, and the more be subiect vnto law and order. For how odious a thing is it, both in the sight of God and man, that he, whose office it is to keepe others in order, should liue beside law and out of order himselfe?

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With what indignation speaketh this our Apostle of such *Rom. 2. 21*? It is not sufficient therefore, for Ministers and Teachers, that by word of mouth they teach; but by examples also, they ought to goe before their people: yea so ought their liues to be composed and addrest, that ech one of their actions should be as a lesson of instruction, and resemble that which they teach.

Such therefore let vs all studie and strue to be, Teachers especially, that the actions of our liues may be precepts, & doctrines, and documents of piety to those, whom (by vertue of our vocation) we are to liue among. Let vs endeavour by our godly conuersation to gaine that authoritie, that by our actions men may argue this to be euill, because we eschew it, that to be good, because we doe it.

Hence are those Teachers iustly reprov'd, that thinke it enough that they teach the truth, though they follow it not themselves. And these much more, that neither teach by word nor life: But those most of all, that both by word and life peruert, and incite others to impiety and disorder. And how many such there are, too too wofull experience daily sheweth.

Out of the Consequent of this reason we learne, that Christian men ought in speciall manner to beware, lest they seeme to approue or fauour the courses and customes of such, whose liues not the doctrine only, but the practise of the Apostles and Euangelists doth condemne. *Pauls* care of keeping good order, sufficiently condemned the disorderly

disorderly cariage of these Thessalonians. The rest therefore offended in fauouring them, whom *Pauls* contrary practise taxed and controlled. Do we liue then among men, whose life and conuersation is repugnant to the life and conuersation of the holy Apostles? Let vs take heede, lest by our familiaritie and society with such, we seeme to set light by the examples of the Saints, and by our practise commit that, that may seeme closely to approue, what their practise hath disapproued and condemned. A fault among Christians too frequent, who are wont commonly to delight and make themselves merry, with such vitious courses and cariages of lewd and bad men, to wit, obscenitie, scurrilitie, lying, drunkennes &c, as are most repugnant both to the doctrine and the liues of the Saints. This ought to be a reason sufficient vnto vs, to dissuade vs from so doing. The holy Apostles in their exemplary course of life, eschewed all obscenity, scurrility, swilling & drinking &c. and therefore we will withdraw our selues from those that affect such courses, we will not take delight in them, or make our selues merry with them, giue the least signe or shew of liking vnto them; howsoeuer we must of necessitie beare and endure them, vnlesse we would goe out of the world.

In those words, *For you know*, &c, is a prooofe of the Consequence of the former reason.

You ought to follow vs; and in your Consciences you know that you should.

Therefore when we keepe far from all such

ſuch diſorder, you ought not to approve it by your companying and familiarly converſing with ſuch as live diſorderly.

Out of the Antecedent whereof we learne :

1. That all Chriſtian men ought to frame their lives after the patterne of their Paſtors and Teachers, in thoſe things, that are agreeable to godlines and good manners. Neither may we take liberty vnto our ſelves, in thoſe things, that are repugnant to the courſes of our good Miniſter. *Ye ought*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *to imitate vs*, to wit, in our courſe of life and Chriſtian converſation. Many thinke that a ſober, ſpiritual and chriſtian life, is required of the Miniſters of the Church onely, and that a looſe, idle, couetous, ambitious, hypocritical life is odious and abominable in them, but is lawfull and ſeemely enough in themſelves. But looke what euill-becommeth a Miniſter, euill-becommeth thee too, if thou beſt a Chriſtian; ſince thou oughteſt to frame thy life after the patterne of theirs, elſe were the Apoſtles rule and argument here lame and vnſound. In bleſſed manner therefore do they order their lives and courſes, who in their life and courſes reſemble the godly Miniſters of Chriſt; inſomuch that they differ not from a Miniſter, but in his function and office of teaching onely.

2. That Chriſtian men are bound to live according to that they know: and it is a ſhame for them in ought (at any time) to ſwerue from it, which yet this worthy Church in ſome things did, and the beſt Chriſtians alwayes haue done. Let vs

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therefore diligently strive to walke according to that we know. Do we know that we ought to imitate the Apostles? What a shame is it then, for any Christian, to be in his life and behaviour contrary to them? The like may be said of other vicious courses. You know you should not imitate vngodly men and infidels in surfering and drunkenness &c: you know that fraud, & deceit, & lying and dissembling &c, are hatefull and odious in Gods eyes: how vnworthy a thing then is it for you, that professe your selues Christians, against Gods will, and in despight of him, as it were, to follow such things?

Out of the Consequent we learne, that not to withdraw our selues from those that liue inordinately, is to liue inordinately. Else the Apostles reason should not hang well together. For the Apostle calleth to imitate himselfe; whom, but those that do not, as is fit they should, withdraw themselves from those that liued inordinately? And what should they imitate in him, but this, not to liue or walke inordinately? They liue therefore inordinately, that liue familiarly and conuerse ordinarily with such as liue inordinately.

Verf. 8. *Neither tooke we bread of any man for nought —*

Here is a confirmation of the former Antecedent. For hereby the Apostle proueth, that he and his fellow-Ministers liued not inordinately, because *they tooke bread of no man for nought:* that

that is, they were ſo carefull to liue according to rule and order, that they tooke no bread to eat of any man, but what they paid for. In this point of liuing orderly, the Apoſtle ſtanceth, becauſe ſome members of this Church ſinned in the contrary, as hereafter we ſhall ſee.

But what is this? may ſome ſay. Is this diſorderly liuing, for a man to eat freely of an other mans bread? Is it lawfull for a Chriſtian man to eat nothing, but what he payeth for? Is not this to take wholly away all hoſpitalitie, liberalitie, kindnes, curteſie, humanitie, almes, Chriſtian ſociety & fellowſhip?

But we are not ſo to vnderſtand theſe words, as if alwayes and euery where it were vtterly vnlawfull for a man to eat or drinke of free coſt. Loue-feaſts, and almes, and hoſpitalitie &c, are commended and commanded in Scripture, and that by *Paul* himſelfe too. But to what end, if a Chriſtian might not lawfully, at ſome times, make uſe of them? What would be more harſh and diſtaſtfull to a free and bountifull diſpoſition, then to make offer to pay for that meat or drinke, that he hath (in friendly manner) invited vs vnto, or not to eat of that we are invited vnto? How diſtaſtfull would it haue bin to *Lydia*, when ſhe ſo earneſtly intreated *Paul* to take his repaſt with her, if he had reſuſed, or had offred money for his meat? Yea *Paul* himſelfe confeſſeth, 2. *Cor.* 11. 7, 8, 9. that he ſpoyled other Churches, taking conſideration of them, to ſpare the Corinthians, and to do ſeruice vnto them. And he defendeth his praſtiſe, and the

like in others at large, 1. *Cor.* 9. 4, 6, 13, 14. *Phil.* 4. 15. *Gal.* 6. 6. 1. *Theff.* 5. 13. 1. *Tim.* 5. 17. *Heb.* 13. 7. 17. But *CHRISTS* owne example is beyond all exception, who, at other mens tables, oft eat bread of free cost, in that very sense, that the Apostle speaketh in this place: yea & receiued from some women too, that ministred to him, of their substance. *Luk.* 8. 2, 3.

It is not therefore simply, but in regard of circumstances onely, vnlawfull of free cost to eat another mans bread. And *Paul* (in regard of some circumstances) would not eat of free cost, that is, refused to receiue consideration, wages and allowance, and doth thence argue, that he liued not disorderly among them, that, wherein he propoundeth himselfe to be imitated of them.

It is not alwayes therefore agreeable to Christian order and cariage, for men, to eat other mens bread and meat of free cost, though they be freely and willingly thereunto invited. There is no doubt, but that many in this Church, would right willingly and gladly haue spared, as we say, out of their owne bellies, for *Paul* to haue eaten: and yet would not *Paul* take ought of free cost. Yea though it were an vnworthy and an vncourteous behauiour in some cases, to offer money for the meate and drinke that we take of others, yet ought we to take it with a purpose and desire at least of gratifying them againe, and of deseruing it, and by how much the lesse we may satisfie them for it in the like kind, by so much the more in some spirituall manner be carefull to recompence their gift againe.

gaine. But far are they from *Pauls* diſpoſition in this caſe, that daily denour of free coſt, and for nought, other mens bread, without any purpoſe or deſire to deſerue it : they much more, who though they receiue it of free coſt, and without any kind of deſert, yet receiue it grudgingly and vnthankfully with an euill will.

And ſurely, this may be a great glory, either to a Miniſter, or to any Chriſtian, if he can ſay, that he hath not eaten any mans bread for nought. And it ought to be a croſſe to a godly minde, to be driuen by neceſſitie, to take ſtipend or allowance freely and without deſert of any man. In regard whereof, an ingenuous diſpoſition will chooſe rather to reſt content with ſlender fare gotten by his owne labour and deſert, then to liue liberally and plentifully at other mens coſt.

— *But we wrought with labour, and trauell night and day.* —

HE proueth hereby, that they took not bread of any man for nought, becauſe *they wrought with labour and trauell night and day* : that is, they earned their lining by ſome manuary and mechanickall worke, as, by tent-making, or the like.

But here, it may not without good cauſe be demanded, if the Apoſtle had taken allowance for his paines and labour, in preaching the Goſpell, whither he had taken it for nought or no.

I anſwere ; No, in no wiſe. The Apoſtle *Paul* himſelfe both affirmeth and confirmeth the con-

trary in the places before alledged. But he addeth this ouer and aboue that which before he had said: As if he should say ; we not onely preached the Gospell diligently to you, which was enough to merite meate and drinke of you, but besides that with our owne hands we earned our liuing, and that with toile and trauell.

Act. 3.

Where first obserue we the condition of these holy Apostles, how poore and bare, and needie they were, and destitute euen of the necessities of this life. *Gold and siluer I haue none*, saith *Peter* to the lame crible. He had not so much, it seemeth at that time, as might serue to giue for an almes to a begger. And yet begged he not neither, no not so much as in shew : for then would not the crible haue asked almes of *Iohn* and him, or hoped of ought from them. Though therefore they were not amongst the beadroll of beggers, yet they hardly kept out of it. At some time they had not so much as a pennie to bestow vpon the poore. Yea, sometime for pouertie and want were they compelled to put their hands to seruile workes, and thereby to maintaine themselves, and supplie their owne wants. Whom would it not strangely affect, and work no small commiseration in, to see such great and so famous Doctors and Teachers of the Church, toiling and moiling, digging and deluing, following the plough, or the cart, or it may be, sowing of garments, and that with much paine and trauell, night and day, not for couetise and base desire of gaine, but constrained to doe it for meere want and necessitie. The condition of
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the pooreſt parſon or vicar among vs is hardly ſo hard, as theirs was, that were juſtly eſteemed principall Apoſtles.

Which may teach vs, to be content with our eſtate, and not to murmur againſt God, though we be neuer ſo worthie, and haue beene neuer ſo liberally brought vp, yet if he ſhal ſee good to bring vs to that pouertie and penury, that we ſhall bee compelled to worke night and day for our liuing. And let vs learne to thanke God, if it bee better then ſo with vs. But far be it from the Miniſters of God, when they may liue well and maintaine their charge, without ſuch labour and trauaile, yea when they haue ſufficient to keepe themſelues and their families not in meane and bare manner, but in liberall and plentifull ſort, to be yet ambitiouſly minded, and ayming at greater matters, chopping and changing of Churches, a great benefice for a greater, and adding benefice to benefice, and affecting and aspiring to temporal honors and high places, as if they were worthier then *Peter* and *Paul*, and their gifts greater matters then theirs.

2. That it is not a thing vnlawfull for the Miniſter of the word, not contrary to his calling, in caſe of neceſſitie, to labour hard, euen night and day, in worldly employments. They ought indeed, ſo much as in them lies, to forbear, and not to entangle themſelues in worldly affaires, but giue attendance to reading, as *Paul* elſe where aduiſeth. But yet, if they be oppreſſed with want, it becometh them to labour as wel as others, and it is part of the entaxie or good order that they are tyed vnto.

1. Tim. 4.

3. We

3. We see what other Christians then in want and necessitie, much more ought to doe, that desire to liue religiously, rather labour night and day if they can, for their liuing, then to eate other mens bread of free cost. They must not beg, or require to be fed freely by others, but labour night and day rather with paine and trauaile, as wood cleauers or the like. That which seemeth to condemne to hell, the life and course of begging fryers, whose manner is not to labour, but to begge other mens bread.

4. The Apostle did not onely for his liuing so labour, but that he might liue to preach the Gospell. So 1. *Thess.* 2. 9. Let not therefore pouerty compell vs to leaue our ministrie: but when otherwise we cannot conueniently and honestly maintaine our selues, let vs euen be content to worke with our hands, that we may with the Apostle preach the more. Labour then about earthly things, is not a sufficient reason to excuse and free vs from the worke and exercise of our ministrie, but we must so labour that we may preach. And albeit it were easier for the Apostle endowed with such gifts as he was, to preach profitably to the people after such distractions as these; yet euery Minister, that is in any measure fit for this function, ought so to be instructed in the mysterie of the Gospell, that euen on the sodaine, and as the present occasion shall require, when necessitie shall require it, he may be able in wholesome manner, to speake vnto his people. Diuines ought not to be worse furnished then Physitians or Lawyers, that

that are able to speake somewhat on a point of their Art propounded, if neede be, vpon the so-
daine.

— *because we would not be chargeable to any of you.*

He rendreth here a reason, why he laboured so much in that manner, not for filthy lucre sake, and loue of worldly wealth, to increase his substance; or out of a pride, because he would not be beholden or engaged to them for ought, but that he might not be burdensome to them.

Wherein 1. he doth intimate the pouerty of this Church, that had not sufficient (without some burden and charge) to maintaine *Paul*. For what? did he vse to exceed so in apparell, and retinue, and costly fare, that the maintayning of him should require some large expence? Surely he would neuer then haue taken such paines, or could he with his paines haue compassed so much as might suffice for such expence. Small procurations, no doubt, would haue sufficed *Paul*. How poore then was this Church, that being blessed with such worthy Teachers, had not wherewith to maintaine them, without being pinched by it? The dignitie and excellency of a Church therefore is not to be measured by worldly wealth and riches, by the outward state of her Ministers, by a silken, a rich, and a glorious Clergy, but by the piety of it, and the meanes of saluation, and Christs institutions, the freenes and plenty of them in it.

2. The Apostle not obscurely implieth here,

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that this Church ought to haue supplied the wants of *Paul*, and the rest of his fellow-labourers there, and to haue afforded them competent meanes of maintainance: else would he haue said, *that you might not by reason of your pouertie complaine of a greiuance.* There is no doubt therefore, but that they likewise ought to haue wrought night and day for *Paul* and the rest of them, that they might haue thereby bin maintained. And surely, it is fit rather that the people should worke for their Minister, then the Minister for the people. The Christian people, therefore ought euen to burden themselves for their Minister, rather then ought that is necessarie should be wanting vnto him. That whereunto Christians are more bound now a dayes, by how much the lesse Ministers are now able to doe ought without studie, and by how much the more danger there is now of their being corrupted, if they shall further then is fit, enwrap and entangle themselves in worldly affaires.

3. It is the Ministers part to be burdensome to himselfe rather then to his people. He ought to consider rather his peoples abilitie then his owne worth: and ought to haue a care, that the Gospell may bring with it as litle greiuance as may be. All is not to be accepted, that of some may be offred: that is not to be exacted, that can hardly be afforded. It is not the part of a Christian, to take alwayes of one that is both willing and able, yea and ought to giue, much lesse to exact, where it is not to be had without much grieuance. It is odious

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in any Christian, much more in a Minister, if otherwise for necessitie and without scandall he may, to eat other mens bread of free cost, though it were offred him; (for all men ought to beare the same minde that *Paul* did) much more ought they to abstaine from extreme and rigid exactions, though of their dues. The Shepherd is rather to feed, then to feed vpon his sheep, and to fleece them but not to slay them.

Verf. 9. Not that we had not autoritie. —

HE preuenteth here a scandall, that might hence arise. For lest some should hence gather, that the Minister were bound to take no allowance from his Church, but to worke for his liuing with his owne hands; he saith, that it was lawfull for him to haue taken of them; and that herein he had departed from his owne right, because he would not be burdensome to them.

Whence we learne :

1. That a Minister may lawfully require a iust allowance from his people, and that euen then when without some burden to the Church, it can not be made good. The Apostle so departeth with his own right, as yet he doth not thereby impeach the right of others, or approue the sacriledge of such, as thinke they may lawfully pinch, as they say, on the Parsons side, and with-hold or withdraw what they can by force or stealth from them, as if nothing at all were for their Ministerie due vnto them; or as if their maintenance were

nothing but meere almes and beneuolence, or gra-
tuities onely. Let sacrilegious Patrons consider
this.

2. It is the part of all Christian men, Ministers
especially, not alwayes to exact, what in strict ri-
gor is their due, but some time freely to depart
from their right; yea euen rather to worke night
and day, then to exact that in some case, which
both Gods law and mans also doth giue them a
right vnto. But how much more ought Christian
men to abstaine from all vniust & vnlawful exacti-
ons, and such as are contrary to all right & reason?

— *But that we might make our selues an ensample
vnto you to follow vs.*

He rendreth a reason here, why though he might,
yet he did not take, *to make himselfe an example for
them to follow.* 1. It was no singular fact therefore
that concerned an Apostle or an Euangelist only;
but such as concerneth euery Christian that liueth
in the Church; who in this very point ought to
follow the Apostles fact as a patterne, in departing
from his owne right, rather then ouer-burdening
his brethren, and not in necessarie precepts onely.
Many thinke that it is the dutie of Ministers to de-
part in part from their right, and not to contend
for the vtmost that is due to them, nor to maintaine
suites with such as withhold their right from
them, but to indure any hard measure and wrong
rather then by courses of law to seeke to recouer
their right: when in the meane while, they thinke
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it lawfull and fit enough for themſelues to exact their owne with all extremitie, euen whatſoeuer the highest ſtraine of legall rigor ſhall wring out to them, from any; and they thinke that they haue giuen a ſufficient reaſon of what they do, if they can but ſay, that they did it by law, and exacted but their owne, no more then was due to them. Yea it were to be wiſhed that many went no further then ſo, euen of thoſe, that are yet readieſt to condemne the Miniſters of the word, if they come any thing neere ſo far as to demaund their due, and that where it may well enough be had. More certaine it is, that Miniſters ought to take heede, that they deale not ouer ſtrictly in ſuch caſes, as the Apoſtle here ſpeaketh, & ſo to cary themſelues herein, that they may be an example to others: but ſo that all men are bound to tread in their ſteps, & follow them in this point as well as in others.

2. It is the dutie of Miniſters, to get that reſpect and honor, if it may be, in the eyes of their flocke, that they may be incited thereby to follow their examples, and count it an honor to them ſo to do. And looke what virtues they moſt of all require in their people, they ought themſelues to put on, and ſo to put them on, that they may ſhine in the peoples eyes with them. The like may be ſaid of the eſchewing of vices. Would we haue our people to be iuſt, pious, courteous, liberall, peaceable, &c? Let vs be our ſelues examples vnto them of ſuch virtues. Would we not haue them to be profane, malicious, couetous, vniuſt &c? Let vs eſchew ſuch vices our ſelues, and be examples alſo therein vnto them.

Verf. 10. *For euen when we were with you, this we warned you of, that if there were any that would not worke, he should not eat.*

Hitherto of the first Argument of his reprehension taken from the contrary example of the Apostle himfelfe: Now followeth an other reason, to wit, that this their indulgence was directly contrary to the Apostles doctrine. For on this wise he argueth:

We when we were with you, warned you, that if there were any that would not work, he should not eat.

Therefore yee ought to withdraw your selues from such as in that point walke inordinately.

Here is a manifest sentence set downe by the Apostle, that idle persons are not to be borne with, nor to be fed and maintained among Christians: but if they haue strength and abilitie of bodie to labour, labour they must. Where the Apostle yet speaketh not of impotent persons, or of such as are willing to worke, if they were able, but of such as will not though they be able; such as albeit for strength, and actiuenes, & yeares, they might profitably apply themselues vnto honest labour, yet choose rather to liue an idle wandring life, without any Christian calling at all. It is no Christian charity therefore to bestow our bread vpon idle & lazie persons, that will not lay hand to any worke. The Apostle was full of Charity & mercy, when as rather then he would burden this Church, he chose
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to labor with his own hands himfelfe: And yet amidst this his charity he both taught and inioyned, this pious crueltie, as some might account it, that *they should not eate, that would not worke*, so farre forth as they were able. For so should we iudge of such persons as refuse to liue by their honest labors, as of those that are well worthy to perish. So that we are no more bound to feed such, then to feede Wolues, or Foxes, or Mice & Rats. And those that bestow their almes vpon such, can expect no fruite thereof at Gods hands againe, but wrath and iudgement rather; because they bestow euill & dispose amisse, those things that God hath committed to their trust.

Let vs therefore take heed how we condemne those as voide of charity that refuse to giue bread to idle and sturdy beggers: for it is to condemne the doctrine of the Apostle himfelfe in this place. And againe let vs take heede, least vnder pretence hereof we deny them almes, who by their worke, are not able to supply their owne wants.

Verf. 11. *For we haue heard, that there are some that walke inordinately with you, and worke not at all.*

Here followeth a speciall reprehension, or a reason rather of the former generall re-prooffe: wherein he reprehendeth them more particularly, for that they suffred some to liue idle among them, not working at all. He meaneth some professors of religion, that vnder colour thereof

thereof, led an idle, and a lazie life, liuing on the sweat of other mens brows, and abusing the almes and charitie of the Church, to maintaine them in their idlenesse. A sore plague to the Church; and such an one as it hath neuer beene free from. For there are and euer haue beene some, who after they haue taken vpon them the profession of the Gospell, and perceiue that they are for the same in some reckoning with the godly, doe thereupon begin to conceiue so highly of themselves, as if it were too base a thing, and not befitting their profession, to labour any more for their liuing, and as if the Church in regard of their profession, stood bound to maintaine them. Hence it commeth to passe, that many that are in the condition of seruants, grow slacke oftentimes in their dutie toward their masters, as if there ought not so much to be expected at their hands as of others: whereby it commeth to passe, that many, to the scandall of the Gospel, haue found care, diligence, industry, and painefulnesse in the doing of their butinesse, and in the discharge of their duty, in such seruants, as make little shew of religion, then in the most of them that are professors. Who especially, if they haue lighted vpon religious masters, are wont to presume vpon much idlenesse and indulgence vnder them. But such professors are not to be endured in the Church; but are as inordinate liuers, to be admonished and reprocued; that we may make it knowne to those that are enemies to religion, and willing to take any occasion hereby to reproach and twit it withall, that our Religion approueth

proueth not, but vtterly condemneth them, and all such as they are.

Hence therefore seruants, and such as haue not wherewith to liue in good fashon, making profession of religion, must be admonished, that they take great heede, how they presume and promise to themselues, as if it were lawfull for them, to leaue their callings, and liue on other mens labours. Nay rather, the more that they professe Christian religion, the more are they bound to earne their liuing by their labour: And the more they labour, that they may not be burdensome to others, the better God accepteth of them. Insomuch, that the baser and meaner worke thou art imployed in, for the getting of thy liuing, and the maintainance of thy life, the greater fauour shalt thou finde with God. For it is not with Christs seruants in this world, as it is with the seruants of Noble men. They are not exempted from labour and seruitude. It is not a thing vnbeseeeming the best Christian that is, to serue euen a Swineherd. Yea he is tyed to that calling, if therein or thereunto he be called. Nor doth his calling to the Christian faith, with-draw or exempt him from the vilest office, that in this life may be, so it be honest and lawfull, be it neuer so base.

— *but are busie bodies.*

The Apostle in these words describeth the very wonted nature and disposition of such: the elegancie of his phrase can hardly be in any other language expressed: and he seemeth to speake contradictories. For how can those that do nothing be said to be busie-bodies? Yet certainly such is the manner and disposition of these men: the lesse they do that they should, the more busie are they about those things that belong not vnto them; they are wholly imployed about other mens affaires, and about such things as litle or nothing at all concerne them. Very seldome is the one vice seuered from the other. For are these idle professors idle, thinke yee? Nothing lesse. But the lesse they labour with their hands, the more they worke with their tongues: they are talking of other mens faults, taxing other mens manners, prating continually of the publike state of the Church and Common-weale, as if the maine burden of both of them lay vpon their shoulders. But would we haue our profession of religion approved by the Apostles rule in this place? Let vs learne *ἐργαζέσθαι*, not *ἀνεργαζέσθαι*, *to worke*, but *not to be busie bodies*; which yet is the fault of most Christians, and of those many times, that are forwardest in profession. Howbeit, let vs not togither with this vice, wherewith profession is oft tainted and foyled, cast profession away it selfe, but learne rather to adorne it with such pious and apostolicall virtues,

virtues, as may well sort with it, and be a grace and honor vnto it.

The Apostle saith, that he had heard this, whither by common fame, or by priuate relation, its vncertaine: either might deserue credit.

1. It is not against Christian Charity, sometime to reprove vpon bare report onely, so the fame or report be worthy credit, as oft it is.

2. It is the part of a faithfull Pastor, not to teach his flocke their dutie onely, but to see what fruit his teaching hath with them; and for that purpose to make inquiry, whether he be present or absent, into the liues of them; and if he finde that they do contrary to his teaching, to admonish and to reprove them. Whereas, (the more is the grieve) for the most part, we content our selues with teaching, not regarding whither that be done or no that is taught.

Verf. 12. *Those therefore that are such, we charge and intreat by our Lord Iesus Christ, that they worke with quietnes, and eat their owne bread.*

After reprehension he endeouoreth a reformation of them; wherein he putteth them in minde of their duties.

And in the first place those that walked inordinately: and afterward the rest of them.

The dutie of the former, which he putteth them in minde of, is, that *they worke quietly*, and that so working, *they eat their owne bread.*

Learne we hence then ;

1. That it is the dutie of all Christians, to worke with their owne hands, so far as their abilitie of bodie will permit, rather then to be burdensome to others. Christian religion alloweth no man to liue idle in the Church ; but vrgeth all to labour what they may. And this labour about the necessities of this life, when it ariseth not from a couetous mind, but is done of conscience, that we may not be burdensome to others, it is a seruice most acceptable vnto God. And on the contrary, the very worship and seruice of God it selfe is distastfull vnto him, and not accepted of him, when men thereby take occasion to cease from their honest labours, and are content to liue on other mens labours, that they may haue the more leisure for religious offices. Though the Church would allow a man meanes, that he might wholly tend diuine seruice, yet might not an ordinarie Christian accept of the condition, but he ought rather to labour.

2 Christian men must not worke onely, but they must work quietly, i. with a quiet minde, not murmuring against God or the Church, as if they were neglected more then were meete, when they haue not things necessarie ministred vnto them ; but quietly resting on the good will of God, and therefore working willingly, as knowing well that it is Gods will that they should so do, that he hath imposed it vpon them, and regards them in their labours, as doing his businesse, and hoping therefore for a blessing from him.

3. That is *our bread*, that is earned by our work.

And

And we eat not our owne but other mens bread, if we come not by it by our owne labour when we can, albeit it be freely giuen vs by others. It is not enough therefore for vs to ſay, that our bread or ought elſe that here we liue by, is our own, becauſe it is yeelded vs by others ; but that alone is ours rightfully, that by our own labour we haue earned.

4. Our bread ſhould be the ſweeter to vs, the more it is our owne: and the more it is other mens, the bitterer ſhould it be. Vnworthy then are they to be termed Chriſtians, that finde the more reliſh in things, the more they are an others ; and that count ſtolne waters moſt ſweet.

That they do this, he chargeth and earneſtly intreateth them by the Lord Ieſus Chriſt: wherein not onely he ſheweth his ardent deſire of hauing this abuſe reformed, and the difficultie of reforming it ; but he implieth withall, that the reformation thereof will be exceedingly well-pleaſing to Chriſt ; and on the other ſide, that this offence was highly offenſiue and diſpleaſing vnto him. As alſo he teacheth the forme and manner, how inordinate liuers are in the firſt place to be corrected by the Paſtors of the Church.

Verf. 13. *And you, brethren, be not weary of well-doing.*

Here followeth an admonition of the dutie of thoſe, that did not liue in ſuch inordinate manner. And it is twofold.

First, that they would not grow *wearie of well-doing*, but that as they had begun, so they would goe on in a vertuous course of life, and not shew themselves cowards, and faint hearted, by falling backe from it, after the manner of those whom he had spoken of before.

Whence we may learne :

1. That it is not enough for one for sometime to haue done well, but he must doe well alwayes, and neuer wax weary of it, or grow slacke in it.

2. That those that doe well are in daunger of waxing weary and slacke, if they be not hartned and encouraged to perseuerance ; especially where euill examples are.

3. That they haue neede of courage and confidence, that would perseuere in well doing : and that it is a note of a base and a cowardly minde to giue it ouer.

4. That the inordinate courses and liues of professors, and in particular this corruption of liuing idlie, vpon the labours of others, and making the profession of the faith a pretence for the same, is a shrewd meanes many times to coole both the charitie, and Christian courage of many. That which our Saniour himselfe foretold would be. Math. 24. 12. And it was that, as it is likely, that made some in this Church to be so affected.

Verf. 14. *If any man obey not our sayings, by this Epistle note him, & haue no companie with him, that he may be asbamed.*

THe second office is concerning those that walke inordinately: and it is threefold:

1. If they be refractory, and refuse to obey the Apostles admonition in this Epistle, that *they note him*; that is, to make a signe as it were of him, for the vse of a signe is to giue notice of something; or to set as it were a marke vpon him, that he may be as a marked man.

He would haue them then so to marke, and regard, and take speciall notice of such, and of their courses, that they may perceiue, that they are noted by them for the same, and that the eyes of men are set vpon them as on a marke or a signe. A meanes worth the obseruing for the correcting of such as liue inordinately. For when they see that the eyes of the godly are set on them, and that they are so noted, it cannot but be of great force, if there be any sparke of grace in them, to make them change their life, and take some better course. And the neglect hereof is wont maruailously to confirme men in their inordinate courses, when the godly passe by them, and seeme not to regard what they doe, but so carrie themselues, as if they obserued no such thing in them.

2. He would haue them to *haue no commerce with them*; he would not haue them to keepe any company with such; that is, not to conuerse so
with

with them, that by the least gesture they seeme to approue of their courses. For he doth not exclude all commerce in generall, as vtterly vnlawfull, with such ; but such onely, whereby either in deede, or in shew they may in some sort partake with them therein. For example sake, he hath no commerce with a drunkard, and an haunter of Tauernes, that refuseth to goe with him to the tauerne, and to make himselfe merry with his swilling & bibbing : and the like may be said of commerce with players and iesters. It is a grieuous sinne therefore and warily to be eschewed, that we haue no fellowship with such as refuse to obey the admonitions of the Prophets and Apostles : For it concerneth vs as much herein to obey the Apostle, as it did this Church.

Now the end of the former obseruation and separation is that such *may be ashamed*. These meanes hath God ordained to shame such Christians as liue not according to the rule of the Apostles writings ; & to that end are they faithfully to be vsed. And though they may make some gracelesse men, hypocrites, and Atheists more impudent and shamelesse ; yet are they of maruailous great efficacie, to shame such, & by shaming them to bring them into the right way againe, that haue any grace at all left in them. And it is a signe of a man wholly gracelesse, that perceiuing himselfe so to be noted by the godly, is not ashamed of it, and much more, that groweth thereupon more shamelesse.

Verf. 15.

Verf. 15. *Yet count him not as an enemy; but admonish him as a brother.*

3. **H**E would haue them to *admonish* such disordred ones, yet not accounting them as enemies, but regarding them as brethren.

Wherein obserue we:

1. That the noting before spoken of, must not be a bare, sullen, and silent eying of them, or a scornfull and hatefull pointing at them; but it must be ioyned with louing and frendly admonition, as occasion and opportunitie shall be offred. They must performe that office by word of mouth vnto such, that the Apostle himselfe did by writing before, *vers. 12.* as he also enioyneth the same expresly els-where. *1. Thess. 5. 14.*

2. That though the Apostle willed them to withdraw themselues from such, yet his meaning therein was not, that they should haue no dealings at all with them, nor performe no kinde offices at all vnto them; but they should forbear onely all such familiaritie with such, whereby themselues might be indangered, or such offenders encouraged in their rechles and disordred courses, or haue the least shew of approbation or liking afforded them. Otherwise that good offices are to be performed vnto such also, and that for the performance of such offices we may repaire to them and deale with them; (which the more neede they haue of them, the more frequent also they ought to be; as sicke or sickly persons require ordinarily more attendance,

tendance, then those that be in good health:) it is apparent, in that the Apostle enioyneth to admonish those now, whom he willed them yet to withdraw from before.

3. That admonition, and that frequent and instant, ought to go before ejection and casting out of the Congregation, according also to this our Apostle his rule & ordinance els-where. *Tit. 3. 10.* yea according to that direction, that our Sauour himselfe hath giuen Christians for their cariage in priuate wrongs done them by their brethren. *Math. 18. 15, 16, 17.* All meanes are wont to be vsed for the curing and preserving of limbes and members diseased, ere we proceed to the dismembring and maiming of the bodie, by the seuering of them from it.

4. That this admonition it must be brotherly, and so all the former offices also. So are we to note such, as we would our friend, or our brother, whose well-doing we sincerely desire and earnestly thirst after. So must we withdraw from them, that our very withdrawing may vnto them appeare to proceed from a brotherly affection towards them, and to tend vnto their good. And so lastly must we admonish them, that by our very admonitions of them, we may make it knowne vnto them, that we beare no foe-like minde vnto them, but retaine still a brotherly heart and minde towards them: yea and that we would not take that course we do with them, but that we desire to retaine and keepe them still with vs, in the mutuall bond and body of Christianitie as brethren.

Verf. 16. *Now the Lord of peace, gine you peace, alwayes, by all meanes.*

Here followeth the last part, or the Conclusion of this Epistle; with a post-script annexed to it.

He concludeth in the vsuall manner, not of himselfe alone, but of all others that vse to write Letters or Epistles, with prayer for them, or wishing well to them. So vse the Latines with their *Vale*, and the Greekes with their *εὔχεται*, to close vp most of their letters, thereby wishing well to those they write vnto, to testifie their loue and frendly affection towards them.

And surely the Apostle is very frequent herein; thereby teaching vs, that it is a speciall dutie of Christians, to wish well one to an other, and to pray one for another: As also, that it is a matter that much concerneth Christian men, and maketh much for their good, that the godly Ministers and Brethren should wish well to them, and accordingly pray for them.

The good he wisheth them is twofold:

The first is *Peace*; and that *alwayes*, and *by all meanes*.

Peace is the cheifest good of euery society; as jarre and warre is the greatest euill: And it is then, when the members of any society do liue quietly, and in frendly and louing manner together, imbracing mutually each other, and communicating all things to the common good either of other, and

herein conspiring together, in affording the fruits of loue, and performing all good offices one to another. To wish them this then, is to wish them an heauen vpon earth. For what greater happinesse can there be here? As on the other side, what can be more wofull & more hellish then the contrary euill? In peace, man to man is a God: in jar & war, man to man is a Wolfe, a Beare, a Tygre, a Diuell.

That therefore that the Apostle wisheth to them, and with them to vs and all others; that ought we not onely to wish to our selues, but by all meanes earnestly strue and indeuour to compasse. Let vs therefore carefully follow those things that belong to peace; and eschew, so much as in vs lies, all occasions and meanes of contention and strife; and hate as fire-brands of hell, all make-bates, raisers and kindlers of contention and strife.

He wisheth them further *all manner of peace*, that is, peace & quietnes in Church & state, at home & abroad, in heauen aboue, and in their owne consciences here; peace ciuill, peace domesticke, peace spirituall; peace with men, with the Saints, with the Angels, with God: and that *continually* too; that is, sure, firme, sound, never-ceasing.

We ought therefore to follow peace, not with this or that man alone, or at this or that time alone, but alwayes, with all men, and by all meanes; and with the Apostle here, with the like as well to others as to our selues.

Now this peace he wisheth vnto them from God the Author of peace.

Wherein he teacheth;

1. That

1. That ſuch peace iſſueth only from God and his good pleaſure; and that he alone is the author thereof; on him it dependeth; and without him there is no hope of hauing it.

2. That no peace is to be regarded, but that, that God is the author of; ſuch eſpecially to be reſuſed as is contrary to his will. It is an accuſed peace, that is gotten by fighting againſt God; it is no peace, but a curſed conſpiracie & war againſt God.

3. That peace among Chriſtians is a ſpeciall worke of God; and for the benefit thereof is great praiſe due vnto him. And by proſecuting & maintaining it, we honor him that is the author of it.

— *The Lord be with you all.*

The ſecond good that he wiſheth them, is that *the Lord be with them all*; that is, that he would be preſent with them by his Spirit, and manifeſt this his preſence by the ſweet influences of heavenly grace.

Now out of the connexion of this with the former, wherof this is the cauſe; we learne; that there is no true and ſound peace, but among thoſe, with whom God is. He by his preſence in houſe, Church, and ſtate worketh this peace. And where this peace is, there is God himſelfe in ſpeciall manner preſent with that ſociety, & a member in ſome manner of it. On the other ſide, where this peace is not, ſome euill Spirit raigneth in that ſociety, and is with that houſe, church, towne or ſtate. Would we then haue God to be, and abide with vs, and to bleſſe

blesse our societies with his gracious presence, and to knit vs fast together in the bond of peace? Let vs giue all diligence to serue and please him: and let vs account it the greatest blessing that can be, for God to be with vs; and the greatest euill that can be, for him not to be with vs.

Verf. 17. The Salutation of me Paul, with mine owne hand; which is a token in euery Epistle; so I write.

Here followeth the postscript annexed to the former; wherein he giueth this Church a certaine token or signe, whereby they may know, that this Epistle is his owne, and distinguish it from all forged and counterfeit ones.

Wherein 1. obserue the fraud and impudency of Satan, who euen in the Apostles owne times, attempted to obtrude vpon the Churches of Christ, bastardly and counterfeit writings, as Apostolicall; that by this meanes he might corrupt the pure doctrine of faith.

2. It concerneth vs much to be perswaded of the writings of the Apostles, and to be able to distinguish them from all other writings. For albeit that other men should write the same things that they did, yet would not their writings be of the like vse, because they could not be of the same authoritie that theirs are. Would we then haue our doctrine to be of weight with Gods people; let vs giue them some signe, whereby it may be knowne, that our doctrine is Apostolicall, and not an humane deuice:

deuice: let them see how it is deduced and deriued from their springs, and hath consonance and agreement with them.

The Signe he giueth them, is the writing of a kinde of Salutation, that was ordinarie with him, with his own hand. For *Paul* oft, as well he might, made vse of other mens hands in writing of his Epistles, himself only dictating to them what they should write: And that it may be, because he had not so plaine or so faire an hand, as was fit for such purposes: or it may be also, that thereby he might giue a more euident prooffe, that what he deliuered, proceeded from his owne spirit, and was not transcribed by him from some other.

Verf. 18. *The grace of our Lord Iesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

THis is that vsuall Salutation of *Paul*, which he was wont to write with his owne hand, so oft as he vsed the helpe of other for the writing of the rest.

Wherein, vnder the terme of *Grace*, he comprehendeth, and consequently wisheth vnto them, all effectuall meanes of saluation that flow from Christ. For to wish vnto any the grace of Christ is to wish vnto them all things, that may make a Christian man eternally happy. then be the vpshot and the vtmost aime Christian desires, to desire the grace of Christ it will bring with it heauen and eternall happines. And that in vaine expect or hope we for, vnlesse he be our Lord, and we become his seruants.

The

The word, *Amen*, signifieth not onely his sincere desire, that what he wisheth vnto them may accordingly befall them; but his faith also and assurance that they should certainly enjoy it.

Which minde let vs beare also toward all those, whom we see to be well giuen, and to embrace the true worship of

God prescribed by

CHRIST.

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